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CANADA

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DES
AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

Le Secrétaire
15/29. Août 1907

Mon cher Ambassadeur

Je vous remercie de
proposer vous dire que
le projet de Convention
est définitivement accepté
par nous dans son entier
et je ne note ici rien
de s'oppose à ce que la
signature ait lieu Vaudai

Vous ne perdez pas
détails que vous indiquerez
dans votre lettre de ce

soies, Mr Nicolson s'engage
à leur sujet avec moi
mon Mr O'Brien.

En me félicitant de
vintat point obtenu,
je en dis bon bon d'ailleurs
dérivé

Yours truly

P.S. Je vous propose
définitivement un départ
à Bruch et un an
à Karlsruhe à Hard, 8.
septembre nouveau style.

PRIVATE LETTER FROM M. ISVOLSKI TO SIR A. NICOLSON (LORD CARNOCK).

August 16/29, 1907.



British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914

Edited by G. P. GOOCH, D.Litt., F.B.A., and
HAROLD TEMPERLEY, Litt.D., F.B.A.

Vol. IV THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN RAPPROCHEMENT 1903-7

LONDON :

1929

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VOLUME IV

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN
RAPPROCHEMENT
1903-7

Edited by
G. P. GOOCH, D.Litt., and HAROLD TEMPERLEY, Litt.D.,
with the assistance of
LILLIAN M. PENSON, Ph.D.

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Foreword to Volume IV.

THE decision to publish a selection from the British Documents dealing with the origins of the War was taken by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the summer of 1924. It was confirmed and announced by Mr. (now Sir) Austen Chamberlain in a letter of the 28th November, 1924 (published in "The Times" on the 3rd December), addressed to Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson. Some extracts from this letter were published by the Editors in the Foreword to Volume XI. and it need only be said here that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to "impartiality and accuracy" as being the necessary qualifications for any work which the Editors were to publish.

Volume IV is concerned almost exclusively with the events leading up to the Anglo-Russian Entente. The first chapter deals with the many delicate questions arising out of the Russo-Japanese War. It includes an account of the critical situation created by the Baltic Fleet incident and the Straits question, and gives a full description, from the British point of view, of President Roosevelt's mediation and of the Peace of Portsmouth. The next chapter gives the details of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which took place immediately before the conclusion of peace with Russia. The subject of the third chapter is a general study of Anglo-Russian relations from the end of 1903 onwards till the signing of the Convention on August 31, 1907, while the next three chapters deal in more detail with the three separate subjects of Thibet, Persia, and Afghanistan. The volume ends with a chapter on the reception of the news of the Anglo-Russian Convention in Persia and by the Great Powers. The period covered is, therefore, that during which the deep-seated enmity between Great Britain and Russia was allayed, and succeeded by a friendly working arrangement. The study of this diplomatic revolution from the English side is thus, for the first time, rendered possible.

One important feature in the volume is the indication of the attitude of King Edward towards the Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* in his interview with M. Isvolski during 1904 (pp. 188-9). Another lies in the views expressed by the Emperor Nicholas II on the Dogger Bank incident (pp. 25-8), and in the negotiations on the Straits question and the subsequent full discussion in Sir Charles Hardinge's Memorandum of November 16, 1906 (pp. 58-60). This may profitably be compared with the negotiations of Sir Edward Grey with M. Isvolski in 1908, to which reference may be found in Volume V, pp. 429-456. M. (Count) Witte's views both on the Russo-Japanese War and on subsequent relations with Great Britain are also of much interest (pp. 77-8, 92-4).

The private correspondence of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice with Sir Edward Grey, together with that of Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock), gives the inner history of the Anglo-Russian negotiations, and special interest attaches to the latter's general survey of Russia in the Annual Report of 1906 (pp. 255-65). One of the points of real interest disclosed in it (p. 256) is that Great Britain was ignorant of the terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance at the beginning of 1907.

The negotiations relating to Thibet reveal little not already published, but there is a curious diplomatic incident relating to the proposed Mongolian frontier formula which is now for the first time made public (pp. 284-6).

The chapter on Persia contains two important papers, the "Curzon despatch" from India of September 21, 1899, previously printed only in part, and of which the most important passage is now given in full (pp. 356-63), and a despatch from

Lord George Hamilton of July 6, 1900, stating the policy of the Home Government pp. 363-5). There is also a valuable Foreign Office Memorandum on Persia of October 31, 1905 (pp. 365-74). Another of October 14, 1903 (Chapter XXVII, pp. 512-22) deals with Afghanistan.

The whole diplomatic transactions are therefore related in considerable detail, and evidence is supplied from the British representatives at St. Petersburg and Tehran, and in India, as well as from the Foreign Office direct.

Probably the most important parts of the last chapter are the three letters in which His Majesty King Edward (pp. 595-6), Sir Edward Grey (pp. 616-7) and Sir C. Hardinge (p. 580) state in their private correspondence their respective conceptions of the meaning and purpose of the agreement just after it was signed. There is also a valuable Foreign Office Memorandum on the same subject compiled at the beginning of the year 1908 (pp. 612-6).

The Editors have made use of the Annual Reports (which began in 1906), of various Foreign Office Memoranda, and also of the private correspondence both of Sir Edward (Lord) Grey and Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock). The material is therefore more abundant than in the years between 1898 and 1904. Though slightly less between 1905 and 1907 than for the period from 1908 onwards it appears to be quite adequate, and there do not seem to have been any conversations of importance with Russian diplomats about which written evidence does not exist.

In accordance with the practice of the Foreign Office already observed in the case of Volumes I, II, III, V and XI of the series, the documents in the present volume containing information supplied or opinions expressed by certain Foreign Governments have been communicated to them for their agreement. The response in this volume has been generally satisfactory.

The Editors have inserted asterisks to indicate gaps or omissions in documents. As a rule these gaps are due to the unimportance of the matter omitted, in which case an indication of subject is usually given. In a number of instances they are due to a desire to consult the susceptibilities of the persons or the Governments concerned, and, in this volume, also to meet the views of two British Government departments. The Editors have, however, omitted nothing which they consider essential to the understanding of the history of the period. They think it well here to state, as they did in the preface to Volume III, p. viii, that they would feel compelled to resign if any attempt were made to insist on the omission of any document which is in their view vital or essential. In addition to despatches and telegrams, there are memoranda and minutes which are properly official documents. No objection has been raised by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the publication in this volume of any documents of the above kind, nor to the publication of certain similar papers or of private letters, which are not properly official documents, but which are preserved in the Foreign Office.

The India Office and Government of India have given consent to the publication of certain parts of the Curzon despatch of September 21, 1899 (pp. 356-63) which the Editors considered vital to their purpose.

His Majesty the King has graciously consented to the publication of Minutes and other papers by King Edward. The Editors have also to acknowledge assistance given to them in several ways by the late Lord Carnock. Lord Newton, who is writing the biography of Lord Lansdowne, has kindly assisted the Editors in several ways, notably in supplying the text of some private letters which are alluded to on p. 172. His

forthcoming work will contain a number of private letters dealing with the subjects mentioned in this volume. In conclusion, the Editors desire to acknowledge the friendly assistance and advice of various officials at the Foreign Office, among whom they would like to mention the Librarian, Mr. Stephen Gaselee, C.B.E., Mr. J. W. Headlam-Morley, C.B.E., late Historical Adviser, and Mr. J. W. Field. They wish also to thank Sir Robert Holland and others at the India Office for their assistance, Major-General Charles at the War Office, the officials of the Record Office in London, Mr. Wright, who is in charge of the Diplomatic and Embassy Archives at Cambridge, and Miss Priscilla BoysSmith, B.A., who assisted in the preparation of the volume for press.

G. P. GOOCH.

HAROLD TEMPERLEY.

N.B.—The Oriental names and words in this volume are frequently spelled in more than one way by different, or even by the same, writers. But in accordance with previous practice (*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Volume I, p. x) it has been thought better to leave the text unaltered.

Note on the Arrangement of Documents, &c.

THE technical arrangement and details of this volume are very similar in principle to those of Volume III. The material deals mainly with one theme, the Anglo-Russian *rapprochement*. The amount of detail varies in the different chapters, the selection being most rigid in those chapters for which considerable published material already exists in Parliamentary Papers, *i.e.*, the first chapter of the volume and that relating to Thibet.

Within the chapters and their sub-sections, the papers are placed in chronological order as in previous volumes; and, as before, chronological order means the date of despatch, whether to or from London, not the date of receipt. The latter is added wherever possible, and readers should be careful to note it.

Most of the documents are taken from the official series of Foreign Office papers in the Public Record Office. The classification of these papers for the period 1898–1905 was thus described in the note prefaced to Volumes I and II (p. ix):

“ They are classified mainly by country (F.O. France, etc.) and within countries by years. For each year the diplomatic documents are separated from the commercial and other classes. Within the diplomatic class there are volumes of outgoing and incoming despatches, outgoing and incoming telegrams, communications with the Foreign Ambassador (‘ Domestic ’) and with other Government Departments (‘ Various ’). Papers relating to certain subjects have been specially treated. Some have been placed together in a miscellaneous series (F.O. General), as in the case of the Hague Peace Conference. In other instances all papers relating to a certain geographical area have been placed together, as with African affairs (after 1899) and the affairs of Morocco. Correspondence with the British representative of Paris or elsewhere appears in these cases under F.O. Africa or F.O. Morocco. A third method was to separate the correspondence relating to a special aspect of affairs from the other papers of the country concerned, thus removing them from chronological sequence. This was the case with despatches on African affairs down to 1899, which appear in special series of F.O. France (Africa), F.O. Germany (Africa), etc.”

The Note prefaced to Volume III (pp. ix–x) described further the arrangement inaugurated at the beginning of 1906 :—

“ A new system was inaugurated at the beginning of the year 1906. From that date all papers, irrespective of country, are first divided into certain general categories, ‘ Political ’ (the former ‘ Diplomatic ’), *Commercial*, *Consular*, *Treaty*, etc. The papers are, however, not removed from their original files, the contents of each file being treated as one document. The files of papers are classified within the general categories according to the country to which their subject most properly belongs. The volumes containing papers relating to any country are therefore in a sub-section of the main series, and these sub-sections are arranged in alphabetical order (*e.g.*, *Political*, *Abyssinia*, etc.). Previously the correspondence with, say, the British Ambassador at Paris was kept distinct from the communications of the French Ambassador in London, the latter being termed ‘ Domestic.’ This distinction is now abolished, and all papers relating to a subject are placed together in one file or in a series of files. The historian finds many difficulties in this arrangement, as the files are not arranged in the volumes in chronological or alphabetical sequence. The Foreign Office

overcomes these difficulties by compiling a manuscript register of the contents, but this method cannot be used so satisfactorily by the historian. It is to be feared that the new arrangement makes it more difficult for the historian to be sure he has found all the papers relating to a given incident."

The Editors are informed that the system or arrangement started in 1906 will be continued for the remainder of the period down to the outbreak of the War; but at present this process of arrangement in bound volumes has only reached the year 1908.

The use of the Embassy archives to supplement the documents found in the Foreign Office series is possible after 1905 only in the case of Japan (to 1910) and Russia, and some of the Archives of the Embassy at St. Petersburg were damaged or destroyed during the disturbances at the end of the War; the papers therefore reached England in a defective State. They have nevertheless been found useful in supplying some points in connection with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (pp. 173-9) and in verifying the text of other documents. The other Embassies and Legations, as recorded in the note prefaced to Volume III (p. x), have not yet sent their later papers to England. It is practically impossible to consult these in a dozen different places, and this fact is a serious handicap to the Editors; they have often found valuable information in the Embassy Archives which was not available elsewhere. It is notable, however, that there are very few cases in this later period in which documents appearing in the "Confidential Print" have proved unobtainable in the original. This fact seems to show that the records are more exact and complete after 1906.

The private collections available at the Foreign Office become more complete from the beginning of the year 1906. The private correspondence of Sir Edward (Lord) Grey contains papers of the highest value, and that of Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock) increases in importance with each year.

Plan of Volume IV.

Chapter XXIII deals with the Russo-Japanese War and the relations of the Powers during its course. The full story of the Dogger Bank incident is told from the British side (Section II), and light is thrown on the attempts of Russia to send warships through the Dardanelles (Section III). This part of the chapter ends with a memorandum by Sir Charles Hardinge of November 16th, 1906, summarising the negotiations upon the question of the Straits, an important statement in view of the later negotiations by Sir Edward Grey in 1907 (*infra*, pp. 279-81, Nos. 257, 258) and in 1908 (Volume V, pp. 429-456 *passim*, especially p. 441, No. 377). The chapter deals further with British claims arising from the War. It continues with a section upon the Peace Negotiations, which describes the view of the belligerents in regard to the settlement, and the British contribution to the mediation of President Roosevelt ending in the Treaty of Portsmouth of August 29, 1905. The last section describes briefly the negotiations of 1904-5 relating to Wei-hai-Wei and to Corea.

The renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement of 1902 is the subject of *Chapter XXIV*. The negotiations opened on March 24, 1905, with a conversation between Lord Lansdowne and Viscount Hayashi upon the question of renewing the agreement of 1902. By May 17, Lord Lansdowne had consulted the Cabinet and made the first suggestion to Viscount Hayashi for an "amplification" of the scope of the Treaty. Series of drafts and counter-drafts were prepared by both parties between that time and the beginning of August, and finally the Treaty was signed on August 12. As heretofore, in similar cases, a good deal of trouble has been taken to show the different stages of the negotiations. The last thirteen pages of the chapter deal with the questions of publication and the communication of the Treaty by the signatories, particularly to Russia and to France. The explanatory letter which was communicated to these Powers on September 8 and 9 was drawn up with the greatest care (pp. 173-5, No. 166, and *notes*). Private letters were sent to Sir Charles Hardinge and Count Benckendorff (*v. p.* 172, No. 164, and *note*). The Editors are indebted to Lord Newton for information as to the contents of these private letters. No copies of them have been found in the Foreign Office Archives.

Chapter XXV deals with the general course of Anglo-Russian relations during the years 1903-7. The first section deals with the first steps towards a *rapprochement* in 1903. It opens with two important papers of November 1903. In a despatch to Mr. Spring-Rice of November 17, Lord Lansdowne describes a conversation with Count Benckendorff as to the main subjects which needed discussion. A long private letter to Mr. (Sir Charles) Hardinge of the 22nd deals with these points in greater detail. The next stage in the discussion is represented by King Edward's important interview with M. Isvolski at Copenhagen, mentioned in a despatch from Sir Charles Hardinge of May 18, 1904. Further progress, despite this promising start, was interrupted by the War. It was not until May 1905 that conversations were resumed, nor till after the Peace of Portsmouth that much progress was made. Their course in the following years is described in the remaining section of this chapter, culminating in the signature of the Agreements of August 31, 1907. The rôles of Count Lamsdorff, Count Witte, and Lord Lansdowne in inaugurating the negotiations are indicated, as well as the gradual solution of the inter-related problems of Thibet, Persia and Afghanistan by M. Isvolski and by Sir Arthur Nicolson. Editorial Notes on pp. 284 and 285-6 supplement the few documents printed on the proposed Mongolian frontier formula. This is a curious little incident, hitherto very obscure, owing to the fact that the formula was dropped out of the final agreements. An important series of documents

reveals the willingness of Great Britain to consider revision of the Treaty stipulations concerning the Straits at a later period (pp. 279-84, 286-8, 290-6). These should be compared with the later negotiations of 1908, *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Volume V, pp. 429-456. The most important of these documents is that recording Sir Edward Grey's conversation with Count Benckendorff on March 19, 1907 (pp. 280-1, No. 258). An extract from the Annual Report upon Russia of 1906 by Sir Arthur Nicolson describes the foreign relations of the Empire and its political and financial condition. The official papers are supplemented by extracts from the private collections of Sir Edward Grey and Sir Arthur Nicolson.

Thibet is the subject of *Chapter XXVI*. The first section adds a few documents to the large number published at the time on the British expedition to Lhasa in 1903-4. The second includes the draft instructions to Sir Arthur Nicolson given him on his appointment as Ambassador to St. Petersburg in May 1906. The subsequent negotiations are described in a series of documents of 1906-7 and in a Foreign Office Summary of April 1907, to which the texts of the Notes and communications between the two Governments have been annexed. A settlement of this part of the negotiations was reached in May 1907.

Chapter XXVII presents the long and troublesome negotiations relating to the delimitation of spheres of influence in Persia, which formed the core of the whole agreement. The chapter opens with two documents of paramount interest, the very important "Curzon despatch" dated September 21, 1899, upon Russian policy in the Middle East, and Lord George Hamilton's reply. Long extracts from the former were published in a Parliamentary Paper in 1908, but the parts relating to Russian policy and to the interests of France, Germany and other Powers in the Persian Gulf are here printed in full for the first time. The second section contains a Foreign Office summary of October 31, 1905, with certain annexed documents, and a long letter from Sir A. Hardinge of December 23, 1905, describing the situation in Persia, based on the knowledge he had obtained as British Minister at Tehran. A number of despatches from Sir Cecil Spring-Rice depict the reform movement in Persia and the differing attitudes towards it adopted by the British and Russian Governments. The rest of the chapter deals mainly with Anglo-Russian negotiations leading up to and following the presentation to Sir Arthur Nicolson by M. Isvolski of the first draft of the Persian Arrangement on February 20, 1907 (pp. 431-3, No. 389). The reasons of M. Isvolski for declining to embody in the convention a recognition of the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf are explained in a number of documents. This and other difficulties delayed the settlement of the terms until August 1907.

The negotiations relating to Afghanistan are given in *Chapter XXVIII*, and they complete the story of the making of the Treaty. The chapter opens with the Foreign Office memoranda summarising the discussions between London and St. Petersburg from 1900-1905. The formal negotiations relating to Afghanistan did not start until February 1907, as Sir Edward Grey wished them to be delayed "until we know more of Russian views on our proposals relating to Persia" (p. 523, No. 468). On February 23, Sir A. Nicolson gave M. Isvolski a paper expressing the British views as to Afghanistan (p. 526, No. 472, *encl.*), the main point of which was that Russia should acknowledge that Afghanistan was "outside the Russian sphere of influence." The first Russian draft of the Convention was handed to Sir A. Nicolson on May 15, and the subsequent negotiations continued until August.

A table showing the evolution of the final text of the Convention is printed on pp. 541-4.

Chapter XXIX illustrates the reception of the Anglo-Russian Treaty in Europe and the Far East. A private letter from Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson shows the importance which they both attached to this "most important and far-reaching business," and includes an extract from a letter by King Edward which expresses his warm approbation of the negotiations. A later letter from King Edward to Sir A. Nicolson of September 17 is printed in full (pp. 595-6, No. 535). The grave apprehensions aroused in nationalist circles in Persia by the belief that Great Britain had made an *Entente* with Russia are vividly portrayed in the reports of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice from Tehran. Reference is made on p. 590 to the interesting circumstances connected with the communication of the Agreements to the Persian Government by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. The chapter concludes with an extract from Sir Arthur Nicolson's Annual Report on Russia for the year 1907 describing Russian relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary, and a Foreign Office Memorandum of January 1908 explaining and justifying the Treaty in view of the approaching debates in Parliament. The last document is a private letter from Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson discussing the effects of the Anglo-Russian Convention in Great Britain.

The Appendices contain a reprint of the full text of the Convention. There is next a despatch from Mr. Spring-Rice of October 6, 1903, relating to Afghanistan, enclosing the text of a Russian communication of October 5, later described by Lord Lansdowne as "almost peremptory" in its terms. This document shows that a serious crisis had been reached, and that the problem of a *rapprochement* was in no sense easy to solve. It is interesting to turn back to the beginning of Chapter XXV, p. 183, and to note that the first attempt to solve the problem began about one month after the receipt of the Russian communication. Finally, a long despatch from Sir C. Hardinge of January 6, 1906, describes Anglo-Russian relations at that time, and the last Appendix contains an alternative version of the revised draft of the arrangement concerning Persia sent to Sir A. Nicolson on June 6, 1907. The Map of Persia, placed at the end of the first Appendix, has been specially drawn to include the names mentioned in this volume and to illustrate the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention.

Errata for Volume III.

- Page 50, No. 59, end of Article II ... For "sous le No. 1^(b)" read "sous le No. 1^(c)."
 Page 292, No. 336, Lines 2-3 ... For "No. 4 of 9th of Sir A. Nicolson's tel[egram]^(?) No. 91" read "No. 4 of 9th^(?) of Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 91."

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<i>A. & P.</i>	British Parliamentary Papers, <i>Accounts and Papers</i> .
<i>B.F.S.P.</i>	<i>British and Foreign State Papers</i> .
<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette</i> .
Count Witte's <i>Mémoires</i>	Count Witte: <i>Mémoires du Comte Witte</i> (Paris, 1921).
<i>Siebert</i>	B. de Siebert: <i>Entente Diplomacy and the World</i> , edited, arranged and translated by G. A. Schreiner (New York and London, 1921). [This is an English translation, with the addition of a chronological list of documents, by the American Editor of <i>Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Entente politik der Vorkriegsjahre</i> (Berlin and Leipzig, 1921).]
<i>Siebert-Benckendorff</i>	This refers to a new German edition of the above by Herr von Siebert, containing a number of additions. It is entitled <i>Graf Benckendorffs Diplomatischer Schriftwechsel</i> (Berlin and Leipzig, 1928).
Tyler Dennett's <i>Roosevelt</i>	Tyler Dennett: <i>Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War</i> (New York and London, 1925).

Names of Writers of Minutes.

A. J. B.	= Mr. A. J. (later Earl of) Balfour	... Prime Minister, July 12, 1902–December 11, 1905.
H. C. B.	= Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman	... Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, December 11, 1905–April 4, 1908.
F. A. C.	= Mr. (later Sir) F. A. Campbell	... Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1902–11.
W. E.	= Hon. (later Sir) W. A. F. Erskine	... Acting 3rd Secretary (sometime Chargé d'Affaires) at Tehran, 1901–3; Assistant Clerk, Foreign Office, 1906–8.
F.	= Baron Fitzmaurice of Leigh	... Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1905–8.
E. G[orst]	= Sir Eldon Gorst	... Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1904–7.
E. G.	= Sir Edward (later Viscount) Grey (of Fallodon)	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 11, 1905–December 11, 1916.
C. H.	= Sir Charles (later Baron) Hardinge (of Penshurst)	Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1903–4; Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1904–6; Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1906–10, 1916–20.
L.	= The Marquess of Lansdowne	... Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, November 12, 1900–December 11, 1905.
W. L.	= Mr. (later Sir) W. Langley	... Senior Clerk, Foreign Office, 1902–7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907–18.
E. G. L.	= Mr. E. G. Lister	... Acting 3rd Secretary at Constantinople and Sofia, 1903–5; at Paris, 1905–6; Assistant Clerk, Foreign Office, 1907–13.
L. M.	= Mr. (later Sir) Louis Mallet	... Private Secretary to Sir E. Grey, 1905–7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907–13; Ambassador at Constantinople, 1913–14.
R. P. M.	= Mr. R. P. Maxwell	... Senior Clerk, Foreign Office, 1902–13.
W. M.	= Mr. (later Sir) W. Maycock	... Superintendent of the Treaty Department, Foreign Office, 1903–13.
J. M.	= Mr. J. (later Viscount) Morley (of Blackburn)	British Secretary of State for India, 1905–10.
H. N.	= Mr. H. C. Norman	... 2nd Secretary at St. Petersburg, 1903–6; employed in Foreign Office, 1906–7.
R.	= The Marquess of Ripon	... Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1880–4; Lord Privy Seal, and Leader in the House of Lords, 1905–8.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

I.—THE POWERS AND THE WAR, JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1904.

[*ED. NOTE.*—Full details of Russian policy in the Far East, up to the Declaration of War by Japan on February 10, 1904, were given in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, Chapter XIII, pp. 197-252. A few extracts are given here of the opinions of neutral and interested Powers during the first few months of the War.]

No. 1.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, June 23, 1904.

F.O. Japan 581.

D. 5.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 165.) Very Confidential.

R. 10 P.M.

King's visit to Kiel.⁽¹⁾

Japanese Government have received reliable information from several sources that the successes which they have so far achieved in the war have been looked upon with anything but a friendly eye by Germany. They have also heard, on information which they consider very reliable, that the opinion in the highest quarters in Germany is that Japan's ultimate success will be a serious menace to the interests in China of all the Western Powers.

An uneasy feeling prevails, which is shared by a good many Cabinet Ministers, that the King's visit to Germany may be of a political character, and may result in a change in the sympathetic feeling and just appreciation which they think prevails generally in England with regard to cause for which Japan is fighting.

Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that he had assured his colleagues and some of Japan's prominent statesmen, who had expressed anxiety on this point, that the King's thorough knowledge of affairs in the Far East, combined with His Majesty's well known good sense, was a guarantee that the visit would be absolutely non-political.

I assured Baron Komura in the most emphatic manner that the visit was entirely of a social and complimentary character, and in no way political. Anyhow a telegram from your Lordship to me in this sense would be useful.

(¹) [The King arrived at Kiel on June 25 in his royal yacht, and left for England on the evening of the 29th. At two banquets complimentary speeches were made by both the Emperor William II and King Edward, and a complimentary speech was also made by the latter at Hamburg. These were all made public at the time, and there is nothing in the Archives to suggest that any interview of serious importance took place. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), Vol. II, pp. 292-7, quotes passages from Prince Bülow's account of his interview with King Edward, which is not confirmed by anything in the Foreign Office Records. *cp. G.P. XIX, I*, pp. 186-90. For the Emperor's views, *v. ib.* p. 189, and *My Memoirs* by Ex-Kaiser William II (English translation 1922), p. 112.]

No. 2.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 580.

Foreign Office, June 24, 1904.

Tel. (No. 94.)

D. 12.45 P.M.

Your tel[egram] 165 (of June 23).⁽¹⁾ King's visit to Kiel.

Apprehensions referred to are groundless.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffair]'s language to his colleagues and your observations to him were in strict accordance with the facts.

You may say so, but your statement should not have the character of an official denial.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

*I entirely assent.**E.R.*⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 3.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1680.

(No. 927.) Very Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. June 30, 1904.

My Lord,

R. July 11, 1904.

I called today on Monsieur Witte at his country house on the islands and as his conversation was remarkable for its refreshing frankness I have considered it worth while to report its substance to Your Lordship.⁽¹⁾

Monsieur Witte was employed at the moment of my arrival in revising the memoirs of a certain Prince Obolensky, who never rose to any degree of historic fame, but who nevertheless was well known for his liberal views and took an active part in the reforms which were initiated by the Emperor Alexander II shortly after his accession to the throne. Monsieur Witte's occupation naturally supplied the subject of our conversation, and he enlarged for some time on the glorious epoch made in Russian history during the first few years of the Emperor's reign and the misfortunes which had been entailed by his having listened to the reactionary counsels of his advisers during the latter years of his life. Upon his alluding to the fact that the reforms in question had followed almost immediately after the conclusion of the Crimean war, I asked him whether he thought it possible that reforms of some kind might be introduced when peace had again been restored. He replied that he thought it not impossible that such might be the case, but that it depended chiefly upon the Emperor and his surroundings, and a great deal upon circumstances which it was quite impossible to foresee. Thus, for example, it had been the policy of the Government for the last six years to suppress the liberties of Finland, to deprive her of her constitution and to reduce the Grand Duchy to a state of homogeny [*sic*] with the rest of Russia. He had always opposed this policy but unsuccessfully, and the assassination of General Bobrikoff would, he believed, prove to be the means of reconciliation and pacification. He explained this view by informing me confidentially that it had been decided to appoint Prince Obolensky, formerly Governor of Kharkoff, as Governor General of Finland, and that although during his former governorship he had got into trouble and an attempt had been made upon his life, he knew him to be a man of moderate views and to have friends and associates among those who deprecated the recent policy of the Government towards Finland and advocated more conciliatory methods. So also the unforeseen might play a considerable rôle after the war, but it would first be necessary to bring the war to a

⁽¹⁾ [For M. Witte's views generally on the war and its origins v. his *Mémoires* (1921), Ch. V.]

victorious conclusion and to settle upon the terms of peace to be imposed upon Japan. He asked me if I thought that His Majesty's Government or that of the United States would at that moment endeavour to interfere in the negotiations which would take place. I replied that, although it was impossible for me to say what the views of the Government of the United States might be, I could safely say that His Majesty's Government had no desire to interfere unasked unless their existing rights were menaced by the proposed terms of peace.

Monsieur Witte remarked that the phrase "existing rights" was somewhat vague, and might give rise to misunderstanding. If it meant the rights we held in Manchuria prior to the Boxer rising in 1900, he believed the Government would be ready to guarantee them at once to His Majesty's Government, since they were limited to the treaty port of Newchwang. Since the occupation of Manchuria by the Russian troops that province had become practically a Russian protectorate, the administration was in reality Russian, and Russians received a preference in all undertakings and concessions that were in prospect. It was impossible that other countries should expect to be on a similar footing.

I reminded Monsieur Witte that a treaty had been concluded with China for the evacuation of Manchuria, and that assurances of the intention of the Russian Government to carry out this measure had been given to His Majesty's Government on more than one occasion. I added that I knew that His Majesty's Government laid great stress upon the maintenance of our commercial rights and of equality of commercial treatment and that I considered it essential, upon the assumption that the Russian arms would ultimately triumph, that the Russian Government should not ignore these points when making terms of peace with Japan.

Monsieur Witte very frankly stated that, although a treaty for the evacuation of Manchuria had been concluded with China, there had never been any serious intention of carrying it out, and that since it was for this and for an equality of treatment in Manchuria that Japan had gone to war with Russia he did not think it likely that the Emperor would be willing to yield upon these points in the hour of victory.

I asked Monsieur Witte if he had heard discussed or if he had any idea of the terms which the Russian Government would impose on Japan in the event of a successful termination of the war. Monsieur Witte replied that he was of opinion that the nature of the terms of peace would depend in the first place upon the Emperor and upon those who formed his *entourage* at that moment. As long as Count Lamsdorff was in office he felt confident that the views and rights of other Powers would be honestly laid before the Emperor, but that if at that moment a new Minister for Foreign Affairs had been installed he would probably, with the view of maintaining his position, follow the example of other Ministers who only advise the Emperor in the sense that they think will be most pleasing to His Majesty. Much would depend on the question whether the war was brought to an early conclusion by a succession of victories, or whether it was indefinitely prolonged and entailed great sacrifices of men and material before being brought to a victorious termination. In the latter eventuality he was of opinion that greater moderation would be shown than in the former, and as a Russian patriot he asked himself whether it was to the real advantage of his country that the war should be brought to an end by a series of victories, and that his country should be for ever after burdened by the obligations dependent upon territorial aggrandizement in its most distant dominions. In any case apart from the question of the absorption of Manchuria and Corea, which was the desire of certain Chauvinists, opinion was unanimous that Japan must be for ever crippled and the predominance of Russia on the Pacific Coast assured. In the same manner that Russia was precluded by the Treaty of Paris from having a fleet in the Black Sea so also would the condition be imposed that Japan should have no fleet, and in order to maintain the supremacy of Russia in the Yellow Sea it would be necessary that the Russians should in addition to Port Arthur hold fortified posts at Yongampho [*sic*] at the mouth of the Yalu and on the South East coast of Corea, so as to control the country traversed by the Yalu and to command the Korean straits. "What will you and the Americans say to that?" he asked.

I answered that in my opinion such terms would be regarded in Europe as a simple act of brigandage and would meet with universal condemnation. It would certainly be a new departure in international usage if the victor in a great struggle was to seize the moment of victory to despoil his neighbours of their territory, and that in view of the conditions upon which His Majesty's Government had on a previous occasion evacuated Port Hamilton the demand for a cession of territory on the coast of Corea would in my opinion precipitate that intervention which the Emperor and the Russian Government appeared to deprecate so strongly.

Monsieur Witte argued that after the sacrifices which Russia would have made in blood and money before the end of the war it could not be expected that the *status quo* of before the war would be maintained and that Russia should remain without material compensation, and that since this compensation could not be procured from Japan it would have to be obtained at the expense of her weaker neighbours. He warned me that whatever objections His Majesty's Government might raise to such conditions they would not be able to count on the support of France and Germany, but would have to rely solely on their own efforts or on the co-operation of the United States.

I remarked that fortunately we were far from being in the condition of affairs which he had foreshadowed, that many and possibly unforeseen events would take place before such a crisis could arise, and that in any case I felt certain that His Majesty's Government could count on his moderating influence and advice in the Council of Ministers of which he was President.

Unfortunately neither Monsieur Witte, nor any of the Ministers except perhaps Monsieur Plehve, has any weight with the Emperor who is said to be influenced chiefly by his surroundings, and more particularly by the Grand Duke Alexander Michailovitch, a clever and ambitious man, the husband of the Emperor's favourite sister, and a partisan of Admiral Alexeieff and of the forward policy in the Far East which has resulted in the so far disastrous war for the Russian arms.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 4.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1594.

(No. 220.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Berlin, D. September 23, 1904.

R. September 26, 1904.

With reference to my preceding Despatch of yesterday's date,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that Baron von Richthofen called on me on the 20th Instant to announce that he had resumed his duties as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In the conversation which then took place, His Excellency alluded to the statements recently published in the "Times" as to a secret agreement between Germany and Russia. His Excellency could assure me that there was not a word of truth in the statement, and that no sort of agreement had been entered into between the two Countries.

I replied that I had personally not believed in the existence of any definite agreement. It was only natural that Germany should wish to be on the best terms with Russia and I could easily understand that, after the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty which was supposed to be so very favourable to Germany, people should have jumped at the conclusion that an arrangement of a different sort had been arrived at.

⁽¹⁾ [Popular alarm in England, as shewn by an article in *Vanity Fair* on November 17, 1904, raised a war scare in Germany which lasted a few weeks (v. *G.P.* XIX, II, ch. 136). There was however a real *rapprochement* between the Kaiser and the Czar over the Dogger Bank incident (v. *G.P.* XIX, I, ch. 135). For suggested drafts of a Treaty, v. *Kaiser's Letters to the Tsar*, (1920), pp. 123-52.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It gives a summary of press articles on Russo-German relations.]

Baron von Richthofen said that it would be found out that the Commercial Treaty was not so favourable to Germany as had been supposed, and that under present circumstances Mr. de Witte was certainly not the person to whom negotiations of a political character would be confided.

I observed that it was not suggested that Mr. de Witte had been the negotiator, but merely that the secret arrangement had coincided in date with the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty.

Baron von Richthofen repeated that no secret agreement of any kind existed, and he regretted the publication in the "Times" which could not fail to create a very bad impression in Germany.

I said that I shared his regret and presumed that we must be prepared for a polemical discussion in the newspapers in which hard words had been used on both sides. I had noticed in one of the German Papers a statement which gave the impression that the "Daily Graphic" was officially inspired by His Majesty's Government, and I thought it a pity that such an idea which was entirely at variance with fact should be suggested.

At a subsequent interview with Baron von Richthofen at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency said that he had not yet had time to read the "Times" Articles himself but that he would certainly do so, and that then he might perhaps ask me to forward to Your Lordship a statement of his views on the subject.

I replied that I should always be at his disposal for such a purpose, but up till now I have heard nothing more from him on the subject.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

[ED. NOTE.—Sir Charles Hardinge's despatches dealing with the internal situation are omitted as having no special bearing on the international situation. They generally record the unrest in Russia as a result of the war and depict the consequent weakness of the Government. The first manifesto suggesting internal reform, published by the Emperor Nicholas II on December 28, 1904, was reported by Sir Charles Hardinge the next day to have been "unfavourably received."]

II.—THE DOGGER BANK INCIDENT (THE ATTACK ON HULL FISHING BOATS BY THE RUSSIAN BALTIC FLEET), OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1904.

[ED. NOTE.—*v. G.P. XIX, I, ch. 134, and ch. 135 for Russo-German negotiations relating to the coaling of the Baltic Fleet, and Kaiser's Letters to the Tsar (1920), p. 123 sqq.*]

No. 5.

Messrs. Jackson and Co. to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

Tel.

Hull, October 23, 1904.

We act (for) Kelsall Brothers and Beeching Ltd. owners Gamecock steam fishing-fleet comprising about 50 steam fishing vessels. Shortly after midnight Friday 21st inst[ant] Russian Baltic Fleet fell in with them whilst fishing in the North Sea. First portion Russian passed safely, major portion Russian fleet after turning search-lights on British fishing vessels for some time opened fire; steam-trawler "Crane" sunk, decapitated bodies skipper and mate landed here, other members crew more or

⁽¹⁾ [Published with a slight alteration in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), p. 377.]

less dangerously injured: steam-trawlers "Moulmein" and "Minnow" arrived seriously damaged by shot: steam-trawler "Wren" reported sunk with all hands: our doctor Jackson accompanied by Mr. Beeching and informants coming London to-nights mail arriving Great Northern Hotel about 3 o'clock Mon[day]: will call upon you to-morrow morning.

Sending similar tel[egrams] F[oreign] O[ffice] and Admiralty.
(Tel[egram]s: Lex. Hull.)

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most dastardly outrage.

E.R.

No. 6.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

Foreign Office, October 24, 1904.

Tel. (No. 174.)

D. 6.35 P.M.

Information has just reached us to the effect that on the night of the 21st instant the "Gamecock" steam fishing fleet of Hull while engaged in fishing off the Dogger Bank in the North Sea were suddenly and without the slightest warning fired upon by the Russian Baltic Fleet. At least one vessel was sunk, two persons are known to have been killed besides a number seriously wounded but several vessels belonging to the fishing fleet are reported missing and it is impossible at present to ascertain the total number of casualties.

It is stated that fire was opened after a change of fleet formation which was apparently ordered by signal and that this fire was maintained for a considerable time. The whole action would seem to have been of the most deliberate character.

After the firing ceased the Russian Fleet continued their voyage without making the least attempt to save life or to ascertain what damage had been done.

One small vessel remained on the scene of the occurrence for about six hours and then steamed after the fleet also without making any effort to save life. The fishing vessels had all their distinguishing lights burning, in accordance with international regulations, presumably well known to Russian Naval Authorities. They were lit up by the search lights of the Russian Squadron and nothing but the most culpable negligence could have led to their being mistaken for anything but what they were, a peaceful fishing fleet engaged in their ordinary occupations.

Inform Count Lamsdorff of what has occurred and say that it is impossible to exaggerate the indignation which has been provoked. It is aggravated by the callousness of the Russian Commanding Officer, who must have known before resuming the voyage that his fleet had fired upon and seriously injured innocent and defenceless people.

It will be the duty of His Majesty's Government to require (ample apology)⁽²⁾ and complete and prompt reparation as well as security against the recurrence of such intolerable incidents. They prefer however not to formulate their demands until they have received the explanations which the Russian Government will no doubt hasten to lay before them. The matter is one which admits of no delay.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

(1) [Paraphrased in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), pp. 377-8.]

(2) [The words in round brackets were added by King Edward and are initialled "E.R."]

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, October 24, 1904.

F.O. Russia 1729.

Tel. (No. 146.)

D. 7.30 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Telegrams reporting a dastardly attack on British fishing-vessels in the North Sea reached here this morning, but have been suppressed by the Censor.

I called this afternoon on Count Lamsdorff, and asked if he could give me any explanation of what had happened. He replied that he knew nothing beyond what had appeared in the press telegrams, but that he had already addressed inquiries to the Ministry of Marine.

I pointed out to his Excellency the extreme gravity of the situation, and that, if it was proved that circumstances had occurred as reported in the telegrams, the action of the squadron could only be regarded as an unqualified and brutal outrage. Public opinion in England would in that case be very justly incensed, and, although I had so far received no instructions from your Lordship, I urged him as a friend, and not as His Majesty's Ambassador, with a view to maintaining friendly relations between the two countries, to make a prompt declaration that if on inquiry the Commander of the fleet was proved to have been at fault, he would be severely punished, and full reparation made.

Count Lamsdorff said, in reply, that the news had filled him with horror; that at present the only information in his hands was that given by panic-stricken fishermen. He could not admit that their depositions were correct, and he was waiting for explanations from the Commander of the squadron. He could assure me, however, that the Government would not tolerate for a moment any action on the part of their naval officers such as had been suggested, that a full inquiry would be made, and that such action would meet with prompt punishment and full reparation to those who had suffered by it. He felt confident that some terrible misunderstanding had arisen, which could not be solved until an inquiry had been made.

I reminded his Excellency that we had had an unfortunate example of the difficulty experienced by the Russian Government in communicating with their ships, and that it would be impossible to let the situation created by this deplorable incident drag on indefinitely, and I remarked that it seemed to me very strange that the fleet, having committed their work of destruction, should have continued their voyage without regard for the sufferers, and without reporting the occurrence from the telegraph stations on either side of the Channel.

Count Lamsdorff made the extraordinary statement that perhaps a report had been received and had not been communicated to him by the Ministry of Marine, but that he expected to have full details shortly from the Admiralty.

MINUTE.

Sir C. Hardinge acted with great promptitude and his language was well chosen. Approve it.
L.

(1) [Paraphrased with some omissions in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), p. 378.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 374.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 24, 1904.

I asked the Russian Chargé d'Affaires to call upon me this afternoon, and enquired of him whether he had any information to give me with regard to the attack

made on the 21st instant by the Russian Baltic Fleet upon a part of the North Sea fishing fleet. M. Sazonow said that he had not yet received any information on the subject. He could only himself conjecture that the incident, which he deeply deplored, was due to an unfortunate mistake. The Russian Government had received numerous reports to the effect that Japanese agents were visiting this country for the purpose of organising attacks on the Baltic Fleet, and in these circumstances it was perhaps not unnatural that the captains of the Russian ships should have been alarmed at finding these vessels in close proximity to their men of war. I asked M. Sazonow whether there was the slightest evidence to show that the Japanese had really been making preparations in this country or elsewhere for an attack of the kind, and whether, if the vessels had really been Japanese Torpedo Boats, they would have displayed the lights which, as we knew, were exhibited by the trawlers at the time when they were fired upon. M. Sazonow said that he imagined that if any attempt of the kind had been made by Japanese vessels they would have endeavoured to simulate innocent fishing-boats.⁽¹⁾ I recapitulated to him the facts as stated in my telegram to you No. 174,⁽²⁾ of this day's date, dwelling particularly upon the fact that fire was opened by the ships of war after a change of formation, apparently ordered by signal, and that the whole attack seemed to have been of the most deliberate character. I also said that the prevalent feeling of indignation had been greatly strengthened by the callousness which the Russian Naval Commanders had exhibited in leaving these wretched fishermen to their fate. It was, to my mind, inconceivable that the officers commanding the Fleet should not have discovered their mistake before proceeding on their voyage. M. Sazonow said that it was useless for him to offer conjectures as to the circumstances, and that he imagined that the Russian Government would desire to be supplied with a report from the Fleet before attempting to address any observations to His Majesty's Government upon the subject. I replied that, although there might be some doubt in regard to matters of detail, the main facts were established beyond dispute. The bodies of the dead sailors had arrived in port. The case was one calling for prompt and adequate reparation, and I earnestly hoped that such reparation would be spontaneously offered by the Russian Government. Of this I felt sure, that if an attempt were made to fence with the question, public feeling here would become uncontrollable. Mr. Sazonow promised to telegraph to St. Petersburg the substance of my observations, and he also told me that the Ambassador was to return to this country tonight and would, no doubt, be glad to call upon me tomorrow.

Although unwilling to make any damaging admissions, M. Sazonow was evidently much distressed.⁽³⁾

I am, &c.

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [It was subsequently ascertained that there were no Japanese, British, French, German or Scandinavian torpedo boats anywhere near.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 6, No. 6.]

⁽³⁾ [This sentence is omitted in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), p. 379.]

No. 9.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 551.)

Paris, D. October 24, 1904.

My Lord,

R. October 25, 1904.

I have thought it useful to resume briefly the opinions expressed and the attitudes adopted by the various sections of the French Press with regard to the

sinking of British Fishing vessels in the North Sea by the Russian Baltic Fleet. . . .⁽¹⁾

To sum up: The Paris Press, with one or two unimportant exceptions, would seem to have determined that the best way of burying other people's hatchets is to shut its own eyes.

Its silence *may* be due to stupefaction, or—less probably—to discretion. But, as a rule, when journals of all shades of opinion refuse to work a mine so rich in “copy,” it is because they do not *want* to do so.

I have, &c.

EDMUND MONSON.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

The attitude of the French Press is most unsatisfactory.

E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [It has been thought unnecessary to reproduce the quotations, which are typical of the French press at the time.]

No. 10.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

St. Petersburg, October 25, 1904.

F.O. Russia 1729.

D. 1·7 A.M.

Tel. (No. 148.)

R. 7·30 A.M.

My immediately preceding telegrams.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs are giving out that they regret very much the incident which has occurred, of which they have no official information, but that if press information is correct, full reparation will be given.

Ministry of Marine, who are thoroughly alarmed as to possible results, are using the same language.

No. 11.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, October 25, 1904.

F.O. Russia 1729.

D. 6·46 P.M.

Tel. (No. 152.)

R. 7·45 P.M.

Count Lamsdorff has just been to Embassy charged with a message from the Emperor.

H[is] M[ajesty] having received no news from the Admiral in command of the Baltic Fleet can only attribute the unfortunate incident in the North Sea to a regrettable misunderstanding. In view however of the sad loss of life the Emperor wishes to (? express to) the King and H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t his sincere regrets and to state that as soon as the circumstances surrounding the incident have been cleared up H[is] M[ajesty] will take the necessary measures of reparation to those who have suffered.

⁽¹⁾ [Paraphrased, with the omission of the last three paragraphs, in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2850), p. 380.]

Count Lamsdorff wished me at the same time (?to express to) Y[our] L[ordship] his own sincere regrets for an incident which to him seems incomprehensible.

His Exc[ellency] further stated that the Emperor had given special orders to the C[ommander]-in-C[hief] to telegraph direct to His Majesty everything that happened together with arrivals and departures but that not a single telegram has been received by H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] or by Ministry of Marine. He added that he would not lose a moment in communicating to me any information which might arrive from the Admiral.

I took the opportunity of carrying out instructions contained in your tel[egram]s Nos. 174⁽²⁾ and 175⁽³⁾ of yesterday.

From what was told to Naval Attaché this morning by Chief of Naval Staff it appears that they have no information of whereabouts of Baltic Fleet and no means of communicating with the Admiral.

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 6, No. 6.]

(3) [This telegram was as follows: "My Tel. No. 174. Inform Russian Gov[ernment] that several trawlers from Milford Haven and Fleetwood are fishing off Finisterre, Oporto and Vigo." F.O. Russia 1729.]

No. 12.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 375.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 25, 1904.

The Russian Ambassador arrived in London last night and asked me to receive him this morning. He told me that he had not yet received any instructions from the Russian Government with regard to the North Sea incident. It was indeed almost impossible that he should have received such instructions, for he understood that, although the occurrence had taken place on the night of the 21st instant, we had not heard of it until yesterday.⁽²⁾ and the Russian Governm[en]t could scarcely have heard of it sooner. His Excellency added that he had already telegraphed to St. Petersburg, and that he felt sure that the deepest regret would be felt and expressed in Russia by the Emperor, the Government, and indeed everyone throughout the country. He would take upon himself to say that no difficulty would be experienced in regard to the question of compensation. The question of responsibility was more complicated. It would be difficult to establish without a full report from the naval authorities, and this might take time; but I might depend upon it that no pains would be spared to ascertain where the blame lay.

I told His Excellency that the Prime Minister had arrived from Scotland this morning, and that I was to confer with him immediately, and that it might, in the circumstances, be better that I should not at this moment present to him anything purporting to be a full and complete statement of our demands. It seemed to me however self-evident that they would fall under the following heads.—We should, in the first place, expect an ample apology and disclaimer from the Russian Government.

In the second place, I could not doubt that they would offer the fullest reparation to the sufferers. I assumed that upon these two points there could be no room for doubt.

Thirdly, it would be indispensable that a searching enquiry should be instituted with a view to ascertaining who was to blame for what, upon the most favourable construction, could only be regarded, not only as a blunder, but as a culpable blunder.

(1) [Published with a slight alteration in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), pp. 380-1.]

(2) [The news of the incident reached the Foreign Office on October 23, *v. supra*, pp. 5-6, Nos. 5-6.]

As to this, I thought we should be justified in asking that we should be given an opportunity of satisfying ourselves that the case of the sufferers was properly put forward and taken into consideration by the Court. It followed that we should expect the adequate punishment of the persons, whoever they might be, who proved to be responsible. But besides this, it would no doubt be our duty to satisfy ourselves that security was given to us against a repetition of such incidents. The only defence as yet put forward, and indeed the only conceivable defence was that the Russian naval officers had *bonâ fide* believed that these innocent fishermen were Japanese agents in disguise. The Russian Fleet had acted upon this assumption in spite of the fact that the trawling fleet was upon ground which it habitually frequented, and displayed all the signals required by the international regulations in force. If, in such circumstances, innocent people were fired upon, on the assumption that they were Japanese in disguise, who would be safe, and what was to prevent the Russian Fleet, during its long journey to the Far East, from carrying death and destruction with it throughout its course?

Count Benckendorff said that he felt sure that no difficulty would arise, either as regards the question of apology or as to that of compensation. As he had already said, every effort would be made to place the responsibility for these acts upon the right shoulders, and he saw no reason why we should not be given a full opportunity of bringing forward such evidence as seemed to us material. With regard to the recurrence of such incidents, he could not himself believe that it was possible, but he felt sure that the Russian Government would be ready to take every precaution for this purpose, and to issue instructions that for the future any suspicious cases should be dealt with with the greatest circumspection.

I again impressed upon His Excellency the need of prompt action. Unless it were taken by the Russian Government, we should certainly be obliged to take our own measures for guarding against a repetition of these acts. His Excellency promised to telegraph the substance of my observations to the Russian Government.

I am, &c.

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 13.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 377.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 26, 1904.

Shortly before midnight last night I received from the Russian Ambassador a note, of which a copy is attached to this despatch. I addressed to him a reply at eight o'clock this morning, of which a copy is also enclosed. At eleven o'clock His Excellency called upon me and explained that Count Lamsdorff's telegram quoted in his note was not an answer to a long telegram which he had despatched yesterday after his interview with me. The latter did not leave London till nine P.M. yesterday. This no doubt, said H[is] E[xcellency], explained why some of the points upon which I had so much insisted were not referred to by Count Lamsdorff. I might indeed regard both his telegram and that which the Emperor had addressed to the King as spontaneous expressions of regret. His Excellency then discussed with me some of the points dealt with in my letter of this morning, upon which he proposed to found a further telegram to the Russian Government. He was however prepared to take upon himself to say that measures had already been undertaken for the purpose of intercepting the Russian Fleet—whether at Vigo or elsewhere he could

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch and annexes are published, with some omissions, in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), pp. 382-4.]

not say. He was also prepared to authorise me to express at once the profound regret of the Russian Government for this deplorable incident, which they attributed to a disastrous mistake due to the apprehension of an attack by Japanese vessels in disguise. He might also say that an enquiry into the facts had been at once opened by the Russian Government and is being proceeded with. He took some exception to my stipulation that we should be given an opportunity of satisfying ourselves that the investigation is full and complete, saying that he thought these words might be interpreted as giving us "control" over the proceedings, but he saw no objection to the presence of legal repr[esentative]s of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. He preferred to await further instructions before authorising me to say that the enquiry would deal with the question of responsibility with a view to the punishment of the guilty persons, but he felt himself no doubt that this was the case. He also felt sure that the necessary instructions would be issued, warning the officers of the Fleet to use the utmost circumspection in dealing with suspicious cases—instructions which would be of a kind which would render impossible any repetition of the North Sea incident. I begged His Excellency to telegraph at once upon these latter points. I said that it seemed to me absolutely necessary that an official statement should appear in the newspapers to-morrow, and that unless it was complete, and dealt with the whole of the points upon which I had insisted it would be worse than useless. I also dwelt upon the need of prompt measures to intercept the Fleet. If it were allowed to continue its journey without calling at Vigo, we might find ourselves at war before the week was over. I took the opportunity of calling H[is] E[xc]ellency's attention to the communiqué which appears in today's papers as to the concentration of the British Fleet at Gibraltar and elsewhere. His Excellency had not seen this statement.

Count Benckendorff called upon me again in the evening at my request. I told him that the telegram which I had received from you made me doubt whether the Russian Government was really taking effectual steps to intercept the Fleet at Vigo with the object of instituting an enquiry as to the responsibility for the North Sea incident. Count Benckendorff said that he felt sure that the intention of the Russian Government was to obtain full information upon this point from the Admiral. I said that I trusted there would be no misapprehension upon this point. We could not admit that the Russian Fleet should be allowed to proceed upon its voyage, carrying with it the persons who were responsible for the North Sea incident: their departure would not only enable them to elude justice but would also render it impossible to obtain conclusive results from the enquiry which the Russian Government had promised to undertake. It was my duty to tell him that unless our demands in this respect were complied with, it might be necessary for us to take measures for the purpose of enforcing them. I said that the Prime Minister was to make a most important speech on Friday evening, and would of course have to deal with this question. I trusted it would be possible for him to make a satisfactory announcement, and if he were able to do so the excitement which was now running high in this country would no doubt subside: but if, on the contrary, he were only able to say that we had received expressions of regret and promises of compensation, he would have to add that we adhered to our full demands and were determined not to abandon them. I was sure that he would prefer to avoid the use of language which could not be regarded as otherwise than menacing.

After a long discussion His Excellency drafted in my presence a telegram of which he has allowed me to make a note: it was to the following effect—

"My telegrams of yesterday and today are regarded by the British Government as implying that the Admiral in command of the fleet will designate the officer or officers responsible for the North Sea incident by means of a summary investigation, which would not take more than a few hours. These officers would subsequently have to be subject to a thorough investigation at St. Petersburg. Their immediate return to Russia is therefore involved. Their immediate trial is considered by the British Government as an absolute condition of the peaceable

termination of the incident (l'appaisement pacifique de l'incident), and the British Government objects to the officers responsible being allowed to continue their campaign before judgment. Lord Lansdowne assures me that in an analogous case the British Government would not hesitate to act in this manner. The situation here is complicated by the fact that the Prime Minister will make a ministerial statement on Friday next, and it will be impossible for him to avoid pronouncing himself definitely."

His Excellency told me that he had received from the Coroner at Hull an intimation that the inquest was to be held on the 2nd of November, but that it might be adjourned if the Russian Government desired that any of their officers should be examined as witnesses. I suggested that it might be desirable that the evidence of any officers who might be sent home from the fleet should be taken. I also said that His Majesty's Government would be glad to give facilities for a representative of the Russian Government to attend the proceedings in the Coroner's Court. We should, as I had already explained, expect to be allowed to send a British representative to watch the proceedings at St. Petersburg.

I am, &c.

L[ANSDOWNE].

Enclosure 1 in No. 18.

Count Benckendorff to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Cher Lord Lansdowne,

Londres, 12/25 Octobre 1904.

Je reçois ce soir un télégramme du C[om]te Lamsdorff, qui me dit que le Ministre de la Marine, à son regret, n'a encore reçu aucune information directe au sujet du malencontreux incident parvenu dans la Mer du Nord entre l'escadre Russe et la flotille de pêche Anglaise.

Il'ajoute que les péripéties dont rendent compte les télégrammes des agences ne peuvent trouver d'autre explication que celle d'un déplorable malentendu, et qu'à peine les faits se trouveront élucidés (les mesures à cet effet sont déjà prises par l'Amirauté Imp[éria]le) une indemnité la plus complète possible est garantie aux victimes.

Le C[om]te Lamsdorff termine en me chargeant de Vous exprimer sans plus de retard, le plus profond regret du Gou[vernemen]t Impérial du néfaste incident dont ces pêcheurs anglais ont été la victime.

Veuillez, &c.

BENCKENDORFF.

Enclosure 2 in No. 18.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Count Benckendorff.

Foreign Office, October 26, 1904.

My dear Ambassador,

D. 8 A.M.

I am much obliged to you for your note which reached me last night.

It justifies me in announcing that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t have expressed their profound regret for the attack perpetrated by the Russian fleet on the British trawlers, that measures have already been taken to institute an enquiry into the facts, and that as soon as these have been elucidated ample compensation will be made to the sufferers.

You will however pardon me for saying that this is not enough. As I mentioned to you yesterday it is absolutely necessary that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t should ascertain who are the persons responsible for this unprovoked attack on British fishermen and that we should be able to say that the Gov[ernmen]t enquiry will be directed to this object also, and that the guilty persons will receive exemplary punishment. We shall also expect to be given every facility for bringing forward

evidence in support of our case and satisfying ourselves that the investigation is full and complete.

It is not less necessary that we should be able to announce that measures have been taken by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to render impossible the recurrence of such incidents.

The only defence which has been advanced is that the panic stricken officers who ordered the attack considered, and presumably still consider, that they are justified in treating as an enemy any innocent craft which they may meet on their voyage to the Far East, on the mere suspicion that it may be a Japanese vessel in disguise.

I need not dwell upon the kind of results which such a condition of mind might produce.

I hope you will telegraph to your Government at once and ask them to authorize you to reassure us on both these points.

It seems to me, I must say absolutely incomprehensible that the officers of the fleet should have left your Minister of Marine without information as to so grave an event, that the fleet should be pursuing its way to the East carrying with it all those who are able to give an account from your point of view of occurrences which surely call for prompt and searching investigation, and that the Minister should apparently be without the means of communicating with it expeditiously. I presume that an effort is being made to intercept it with a view to at least obtaining from the authors of the attack such explanations and such evidence as they may be able to furnish. I shall be glad if you will enable me to say that I am right as to this.

[I have, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 14.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

Foreign Office, October 27, 1904.

Tel. (No. 183.)

D. 6 P.M.

My telegram No. 181 (of to-day).

I have told Russian Ambassador officially that we are wholly unable to accept Admiral's explanation, and that it will certainly not carry conviction in this country. I have informed him of our demands which are as follows:—

1. Before Russian Fleet leaves Vigo enquiry to be made by Russian authorities as to persons responsible for attack on fishing fleet. All these to be left behind, as well as any others whose testimony is essential to elucidation of facts.
2. A full enquiry to be held at once as to the facts by an independent Court with an international character. Procedure might be that laid down in Articles IX to XIV of Hague Convention, and Commission might be formed of naval officers of high rank representing the two Powers concerned and, say, three other Powers.
3. Russian Government to undertake to punish adequately any persons found guilty by Commission.

In reply to a question by him I said that if these demands were conceded, acute character of crisis would disappear, as Russian Government had already expressed its deep regret promised liberal compensation and undertaken to prevent recurrence of similar incidents.

⁽¹⁾ [Published with slight alteration in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), pp. 386-7.]

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

St. Petersburg, October 27, 1904.

F.O. Russia 1729.

Tel. (No. 160.) Confidential.

D. 8.40 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Count Lamsdorff mentioned to me this morning that he had received Count Benckendorff's telegram contained in your telegram No. 180.⁽¹⁾ I gathered that he considered the general purport to be humiliating and unacceptable to a Great Power. It must be that the Russian Government are excessively sensitive at the present moment of their dignity as a Great Power after the reverses they have suffered.

After the explanation given by the Russian Admiral the matter has entered upon a new phase and the punishment of responsible officer has now become practically impossible. I venture to suggest that a solution of the difficulty might be found by the immediate proposal (of joint) enquiries to be made at both Vigo and Hull.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It was expanded in despatch No. 377, which is printed above, pp. 11-13, No. 13.]

No. 16.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 378.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 27, 1904.

The Russian Ambassador asked me to see him this morning at 11 o'clock.

He told me that he had a remarkable and important communication to make to me. Captain Boström, the Naval Attaché to the Russian Embassy, had sent a private telegram yesterday morning to Admiral Rozdjestwensky informing him of the events alleged to have taken place in the North Sea on the night of the 21st instant. Captain Boström had received this morning a telegram from the Admiral, despatched from Vigo at 9.50 P.M., running as follows:—

“The North Sea incident was occasioned by the action of two torpedo boats which steamed at full speed under cover of the night, and shewing no lights, towards the ship which was leading our detachment. It was only after our search-lights had been turned on that it was remarked that a few small steam craft bearing a resemblance to trawlers were present.

“The detachment made every effort to spare these craft, and ceased firing as soon as the torpedo boats had disappeared from sight.

“The Russian detachment did not include any torpedo destroyers, and no Russian vessel of any kind was left behind upon the scene of the incident. It follows that the vessel which is declared to have remained in the neighbourhood of the small fishing boats until daylight must have been one of the two enemy's torpedo boats, which had only sustained some injuries, the other one having been sunk.

“Our ships refrained from giving assistance to the trawlers on account of their apparent complicity, which they manifested by their persistence in attempting to pass through our line.

“Some of these trawlers did not show their navigation lights for a long time, and others not at all.”

⁽¹⁾ [Published with some alterations and omissions in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (C'd. 2350). pp. 387-9.]

His Excellency said that he had asked, but not yet obtained permission from Count Lamsdorff to communicate this telegram to me officially. In the meantime he could only do so on his own responsibility.

After reading the telegram, I told Count Benckendorff that the version given by the Admiral was one which would not carry the slightest conviction with it in this country. The statement seemed to me to bristle with improbabilities. How was it possible that these Japanese Torpedo Boats should have been found in the middle of the North Sea? Where had they come from? What evidence was there to show that they existed? Captain Boström, who was present at our interview, said that it was scarcely possible for the Russian officers to have made a mistake. The steam trawlers were slow-going craft, whose appearance left no doubt as to their character. The two Torpedo Boats had, on the contrary, been seen going at a great speed. I replied that I had no expert knowledge of these matters, but that it was well known that the trawling fleet had attached to it a certain number of swift steamers which ply between the fleet and our ports, carrying from the former to the latter the daily catch of the trawlers. It seemed to me at least possible that these Carriers should have been mistaken by panic-stricken officers for Torpedo Boats.

Count Benckendorff laid much stress upon the statement that the detachment of the Russian Fleet did not include any Torpedo Boats, and that no Russian vessel of any kind had remained behind upon the scene of the incident. I asked whether it was not the case that the Russian Fleet consisted of fifty or sixty vessels of different sorts, and whether it was possible for the Russian Admiral to be sure that one of these had not lagged behind. Was he in a position to answer for every ship in the Squadron? Captain Boström interposed the important statement that, in his belief, the Admiral himself was not there, and had derived his information from other officers who were.

Count Benckendorff asked me whether I did not think that the Admiral's statement entirely altered the situation. I replied that I did not think so. We still demanded a thorough investigation with the view to ascertaining where the responsibility lay and obtaining the punishment of the culprits.

Count Benckendorff replied that it was evident that an investigation had already taken place. The Admiral had arrived at Vigo early yesterday, and had no doubt already instituted an enquiry to supplement any information which he had been able to collect during his voyage.

I replied that the enquiry, if there had been one, must obviously have been of a very hurried description, and that it was idle to suppose that we could regard it as disposing of the facts of the case. The situation was this—We had made representations founded upon evidence which we believed to be in the main trustworthy, although there might be room for doubt in regard to points of detail. There was no doubt that these unfortunate men had been killed and their vessels sunk or injured, and that they were absolutely innocent. The Russian Government had now put in the counter-statement which he had just handed to me, and which, as I had already said, we could obviously not accept as conclusive. In such a case there was only one course which could properly be followed. The whole case must form the subject of a complete and searching investigation, and such an investigation could not take place without the presence of the persons who were responsible for the attack upon the fishing fleet and thoroughly aware of the circumstances under which it took place. We adhered to our demand that those persons should be recalled and placed upon their trial.

I begged His Excellency to telegraph at once in this sense to the Russian Government, and he said that he would do so.

His Excellency called upon me again in the afternoon. I told him that I had communicated to the Prime Minister and some of my colleagues the telegram which he had allowed me to see in the morning, and that I had repeated to them the observations which I had made to His Excellency during our interview. They had approved my language, and regarded Admiral Rojdestvensky's explanation as one which it was out of the question for us to accept, and which would not be taken

seriously in this country. I was now in a position to tell His Excellency that in our view it was absolutely necessary that before the Russian Fleet leaves Vigo steps should be taken by the Russian authorities to ascertain who were the persons responsible for the attack upon the fishing fleet. All these persons should be left behind, as well as any others whose testimony was regarded by the Russian Naval Authorities as essential to the elucidation of the facts. An enquiry would then be held as to these, and in our view such an enquiry could best be entrusted to an independent Court possessing an international character. Articles IX to XIV of the Hague Convention on International Commissions of Enquiry seemed to us to provide for such an enquiry. We were inclined to think that the Commission might in this instance be formed of naval officers of high rank representing the two Powers concerned, and, say, three of the other Great Powers; but these were details which might be hereafter discussed. It would of course be a *sine quâ non* that we should receive an assurance from the Russian Government that they would punish adequately the persons, if any, who might be found by the international Commission to have been guilty. His Excellency said at once that such an assurance would certainly be forthcoming. He told me that he had already telegraphed, as the impression which he had derived from a conversation with me, the substance of what I had said to him in the morning. He would now confirm this telegram officially. He had made it quite clear that we insisted upon a trial, and that this involved the appearance ("confrontation") of the persons interested and therefore their withdrawal from the Fleet—"débarquement"). He asked me whether he might add that if this demand were conceded the crisis would no longer remain acute. I said that as the Russian Government were ready to express its deep regret, to promise liberal compensation, and also to assure us that precautions would be taken to prevent a recurrence of such incidents, it seemed to me that the further demand which we had been discussing was, in effect, the only obstacle to an arrangement which would certainly deprive the situation of its present acute character.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 17.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

Immediate.

Sir,

Admiralty, October 27, 1904.

With reference to the North Sea incident, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request that you will inform the Marquess of Lansdowne that, from enquiries which have been made, it has been ascertained that there were no torpedo boat Destroyers belonging to H[is] M[ajesty's] Fleet in the North Sea between Friday afternoon (21st instant) and Monday (24th instant).

I am, &c.

EVAN MACGREGOR.

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), p. 389.]

No. 18.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, October 28, 1904.*

F.O. Russia 1729.

D. 3.46 [P.M.]

Tel. (No. 164.)

R. 3.20 [P.M.]

Count Lamsdorff has just communicated to me following telegram which has been sent to Russian Ambassador at London.

“Desiring to throw as much light as possible on what has passed in North Sea our august Master considers it useful to submit the scrupulous examination of this question to an international commission of enquiry as foreshadowed by the Convention of the Hague. By supreme order Your Excellency is invited to propose this mode of solution to the British Government.”

Count Lamsdorff adds in his note the hope that this proposal will meet with the best reception in London.

⁽¹⁾ [Paraphrased in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), p. 389.]

No. 19.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.

F.O. Russia 1729.

Immediate and Confidential.

Sir,

Admiralty, October 28, 1904.

I have to transmit herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, deciphers of telegrams which have been sent to the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Home fleet and Vice-Admiral, Channel fleet, in consequence of the outrage committed by the Baltic fleet in the North Sea.

I am, &c.

EVAN MACGREGOR.

Enclosure 1 in No. 19.

*Decipher of Telegram No. 361 sent to Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean,
25th October, 1904.*

Tel. (No. 361.)

Admiralty, October 25, 1904.

Send 6 Battleships and all Armoured Cruisers and all available Destroyers immediately to Gibraltar to wait orders.

Enclosure 2 in No. 19.

*Decipher of Telegram No. 69 sent to Vice-Admiral, Channel Fleet, Gibraltar,
27th October, 1904.*

Tel. (No. 69.)

Admiralty, October 27, 1904.

In consequence of the outrage in the North Sea, H[is] M[ajesty's] Government have informed the Russian Government that an immediate and ample apology, full reparation, punishment of the responsible Officers, and security against a repetition of the offence are expected.

It will obviously be necessary for the Russian Government to detain the Baltic fleet at Vigo or in the vicinity for a sufficient time to obtain full information and ascertain who is responsible.

We hope that the Russian Government will do this without hesitation, for we could not allow the Baltic Fleet to get out of our reach without any attempt having been made to satisfy our demands. This is not a case where diplomatic delays can be tolerated.

It may become necessary for you to stop the Baltic Fleet, by persuasion if possible, but by force if necessary.

In order to make your force such that there could be no dishonour to the Russians in yielding to it we are sending you six battleships, four armoured cruisers, and all available destroyers from the Mediterranean, but the ships from the Mediterranean except the cruisers already detained at Gibraltar can hardly reach you before Tuesday next.

In another telegram you will receive full particulars of Baltic Fleet and what we know of its movements. Full instructions will be sent you later without which you are not to act, but meanwhile keep touch with the movements of the Baltic Fleet by means of your cruisers, so far as you can.

Enclosure 3 in No. 19.

Decipher of Telegram sent to Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, 27th October, 1904.

Tel. Admiralty, October 27, 1904.

Proceed at once to Portland. Report when you can leave.

Enclosure 4 in No. 19.

Decipher of Telegram sent to Captain (D), "Halcyon," 27th October, 1904.

Tel. Admiralty, October 27, 1904.

Assemble the three flotillas at Portland at once.

Enclosure 5 in No. 19.

Decipher of Telegram sent to Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean (to Pola), No. 368, 27th October, 1904.

Tel. (No. 368.) Admiralty, October 27, 1904.

Assemble at once all the ships under your command at Malta, except those ordered to Gibraltar. Fill up with coal and stores and await further orders. Arrange to mask if necessary the Russian Vessels in Eastern Mediterranean.

No. 20.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 379.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 28, 1904.

The Russian Ambassador called on me this morning at eleven o'clock.

His Excellency informed me that he had just received a telegram from Count Lamsdorff to the effect that telegraphic instructions had been sent to Admiral Rojdestvensky to remain at Vigo until he received further instructions, with the vessels in the presence of which the North Sea incident had taken place, with a view to the necessary elucidation of the facts.

⁽¹⁾ [Published with slight alterations in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), pp. 391-3.]

The Russian Government were convinced that in these circumstances the Spanish Government would not raise any objection to the prolongation of the stay of part of the Fleet at Vigo. His Excellency expressed a hope that His Majesty's Government would intimate to the Spanish Government that they would raise no objection to the Russian ships remaining at Vigo for this purpose. I replied that I would instruct Sir E. Egerton to this effect.

His Excellency dwelt upon the great importance of a decision he had announced, which would have the effect of avoiding the difficulties which might have arisen had the whole Russian Fleet pursued its voyage immediately. His Excellency told me that he had also received telegrams from Count Lamsdorff in which he was instructed to ascertain the ideas of the British Government in regard to the manner in which any preliminary enquiry which might be held at Vigo should be conducted, and, secondly, how we proposed that the subsequent enquiry at St. Petersburg should be organised? Count Lamsdorff wished us to understand that he objected to any arrangement which would give the British Government "control" over the proceedings. His Excellency explained that these telegrams were none of them in reply to that which he had sent yesterday at my instance proposing an investigation of the facts by an independent tribunal. I replied that the enquiries which would be instituted at Vigo seemed to me to concern the Russian Authorities whose duty it would be to single out and detain any persons who were responsible for the attack on the fishing fleet or whose testimony was, in their opinion, necessary for the purposes of the subsequent proceedings. As for the Court of Enquiry at St. Petersburg, I had already explained that we only desired to be given an opportunity of watching the proceedings and seeing that the evidence for the British case was properly put forward. I pointed out however that under the proposal which we had lately been discussing the St. Petersburg Court could not sit until after the enquiry as to the facts had taken place.

His Excellency dwelt with much earnestness upon the necessity of treating this difficult question in a conciliatory spirit. He trusted that the Prime Minister, in the speech which he was to deliver this evening, would give the Russian Government credit for having with the utmost promptitude expressed its regret for the incident, and proposed compensation upon the most liberal scale for the sufferers. As for the rest, they merely asked to be allowed to wait for the Admiral's report. They had never repelled any of our suggestions ("n'avaient jamais rien repoussé"), and they had dealt as expeditiously as possible with our representations. A certain amount of delay was however inevitable. It seemed to him that if the Prime Minister was able to say something of this sort, and further, that the responsible section of the Fleet had been ordered to remain at Vigo pending an enquiry as to the persons who were responsible for the attack, that a full and searching enquiry would then be held as to the whole of the facts, and that any persons found guilty of misconduct would be placed upon their trial and adequately punished, public opinion in this country ought to be satisfied.

His Excellency read to me another telegram which reached him while he was in my room, from Count Lamsdorff, who said he was just going to see the Emperor, and that in his own opinion the idea of an International Commission under the Hague Convention was an excellent one.

I told His Excellency that I should not fail to report what he had said to the Prime Minister, who would, I felt sure, endeavour to avoid exasperating public opinion either here or abroad.

(²) His Excellency called upon me again this afternoon immediately after the sitting of the Cabinet, and brought with him a communication, of which he allowed me to take a copy, from Count Lamsdorff, which ran as follows:—

"Désirant jeter le plus de lumière possible sur tout ce qui s'est passé dans la Mer du Nord, l'Empereur trouverait utile de déferer l'examen scrupuleux de

(²) [The part of this despatch which follows was submitted to His Majesty King Edward, who marked it "*Approuvé* d.—E.R."]

cette question à une commission internationale d'enquête prévue par la Convention de la Haye. D'ordre de Sa Majesté, Votre Excellence est invitée à proposer ce mode de solution au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique."

I told His Excellency that the question had been carefully examined by the Cabinet, and that the proposal now made by Count Lamsdorff was in accord with that which I had yesterday expressed the willingness of His Majesty's Government to accept. It dealt however only with a part of the question before us, and it was necessary that there should be no misunderstanding with regard to the remaining points. I asked His Excellency whether I had his authority to authorise Mr. Balfour to make a statement, should he desire to do so, upon the following lines:—

"The Russian Government, on hearing of the North Sea incident, at once expressed its profound regrets. The Russian Emperor telegraphed to the King in the same sense.

"The Russian Government also promised the most liberal compensation.

"They have now ordered the detention at Vigo of that part of the Fleet which was concerned in the incident, in order that the Naval Authorities may ascertain what officers were responsible for the incident.

"These officers and any material witnesses will not proceed with the Fleet on its voyage to the Far East.

"An enquiry will be instituted into the facts. The Russian Government consider that for this purpose it would be useful to entrust this enquiry to an international commission of the kind provided for by the Hague Convention.

"Any persons found guilty by this tribunal will be tried by the Russian Government and punished adequately.

"The Russian Government undertake that precautions will be taken to guard against the recurrence of such incidents, and with this object special instructions will be issued to the whole Russian Fleet, so as to secure neutral commerce from all risk."

His Excellency said that I was at liberty so to inform the Prime Minister.

I may observe that I asked His Excellency at first whether the Russian Government would supply us with a list of the Russian vessels which were to be detained at Vigo. He expressed his reluctance to ask for this information, but observed that such a list would have to be furnished to the Spanish Government, from which we could no doubt obtain it. I informed him that in these circumstances I would not press for a nominal list of the vessels. I dwelt at some length upon the importance of issuing special instructions to the Russian Fleet with the object of avoiding a recurrence of such incidents as that which had occurred in the North Sea. I explained that I urged this demand in the interests not only of British, but of neutral commerce generally. I referred His Excellency particularly to the statement contained in your telegram No. 157 of the 27th inst[ant],⁽³⁾ from which we learned that the Russian Admiral had

(3) [Sir C. Hardinge's Telegram No. 157 of October 27, 1904, D. 3.50 P.M., R. 6.15 P.M., quoted the text of a telegram sent by the Admiral in Command of the Baltic Fleet at Vigo to the Minister of Marine. It was communicated to Sir C. Hardinge by Count Lamsdorff on the 27th. The text was as follows:—

"Count Lamsdorff has invited me to take necessary steps for protection of English fishermen near Vigo.

The squadron has met many hundreds of fishermen and has treated them with every consideration except in the case when the fishermen were in company of foreign torpedo boats one of which has disappeared and the other, according to deposition of the fishermen themselves, remained near them till morning. They took it for a Russian ship and were indignant that it did not come to help the wounded, but it was of foreign nationality and remained till morning to find its consort or to repair its damages. It evidently feared to betray its origin to those who were not its accomplices. If there were also fishermen on the spot who were imprudently drawn into the enterprise I wish to express in the name of the whole squadron to the unfortunate victims their most sincere regrets. In the above-mentioned circumstances no warship could have acted otherwise even in time of profound peace."

reported to the Minister of Marine that "even in time of peace no warship could have acted otherwise" than the Russian vessels which had attacked our trawling fleet. I had noticed apparently authentic statements in the French press to the effect that Admiral Rojdestvensky claimed to have acted in conformity with the instructions given to him at the time of starting. It was stated that the officers in command of the Fleet knew when they left Libau that they had to fire upon every boat that came near their Squadron. If instructions of this kind had been issued, and remained in force, the presence of the Russian Fleet was a menace to neutral commerce in any seas through which it might pass. We considered it our duty to protest against this doctrine, and I was glad to understand from His Excellency that measures would be taken with the object of impressing upon the Russian Navy a very different view of their duties as belligerents.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 21.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 554.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 28, 1904.

The French Ambassador, with whom I have been in constant communication during the last few days upon the subject of the North Sea incident, called upon me this morning. He had received private information from the Russian Ambassador that the Russian Government had consented to stop their Fleet, or a portion of it, at Vigo, and also that they took no exception to our proposal that an enquiry should be held as to the facts. His Excellency expressed to me the opinion that the first of these concessions was of great importance. He earnestly trusted that it would enable us to find a solution of the difficulty. The situation seemed to him very serious, but the difficulty of finding a solution ought not to be insuperable. The French Government, whom he had kept fully informed, naturally took an intense interest in the question. The French held a vast financial stake in Russia, and there was besides the well-known understanding between the two countries. His Excellency said that he did not himself know precisely what obligations France had undertaken in virtue of that understanding. He did not however believe that if there was a collision, France would join Russia against us, but if a collision occurred, and particularly if it were brought on by unreasonable demands on our part, there would be a *revirement* of public feeling, and the Anglo-French *entente* could not fail to suffer. It seemed to the French Government that, considering how slow were the methods usual in Russian diplomacy, the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had upon this occasion been prompt in apologizing and offering the promises of reparation. It was not altogether unnatural that they should have desired to await the report of their Admiral before saying more. That report had now been received, and seemed, His Excellency said, to him, to be absurd, although there certainly were some circumstances which seemed to require explanation: he earnestly trusted that the Prime Minister would deal with the question this evening in a conciliatory spirit, and would make the most of the progress which had already taken place in the direction of a satisfactory arrangement.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1729.

Tel. (No. 165.)

St. Petersburg, October 29, 1904.

D. 12.54 A.M.

R. 8 A.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 188.⁽¹⁾ I have just had a long conversation with C[oun]t Lamsdorff. He said that he had not understood from Russian Ambassador's tel[egram] that Y[our] L[ordship] had made practically the same proposal for an international court of enquiry based on Hague Convention, but that he gladly accepts this proof of Y[our] L[ordship]'s readiness to accept proposal made by Emperor and as soon as he hears of its formal acceptance he will discuss details of its composition and procedure. He advocates that it should be simplified as much as possible.

Orders have been sent to detain squadron at Vigo and instr[uction]s will be sent to detach those officers who were in best position to judge what took place. Count Lamsdorff declined to discuss question of punishment as he could not admit until the results of enquiry were known that guilt attached to any Russian officers. At the conclusion of the enquiry it would be the moment to apportion responsibilities and their consequences in whatever direction they might lie. He expressed great satisfaction at the peaceful turn given to discussion of this question which he attributed to careful moderation of Y[our] L[ordship]'s language since any symptom of menace would have been deeply resented and could hardly have failed to produce a war which would have been a reproach to the civilization of this century. He complained bitterly of the menacing tone of the British press but I pointed out that it was intelligible.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 14, No. 14.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1729.

(No. 388.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 29, 1904.

The Russian Ambassador called upon me today and told me that he had read the speech delivered by the Prime Minister last night at Southampton with much interest. Of what His Excellency termed the political part of the speech—that in which the attitude and conduct of the Russian Government were referred to—he had not a word of complaint to make. He thought, on the contrary, that it was better than he had ventured to expect; but he greatly deplored the passages in which Mr. Balfour referred to the Admiral's explanation of the North Sea incident. Mr. Balfour's tone seemed to him needlessly caustic and offensive. Statements solemnly made by high Russian Naval Authorities were described as mere romances. The speech would be regarded as an insult to the Russian naval uniform. Count Benckendorff greatly regretted that Mr. Balfour should have spoken in this manner, as he feared that the effect produced by the speech would render it more difficult hereafter to deal with any complications which might arise.

(¹) [On October 29 the Emperor Nicholas II unexpectedly summoned Sir C. Hardinge (*v. Tel. No. 167* to Lord Lansdowne of Oct. 30, F.O. Russia 1730). This telegram is not given here as being more fully reported by a despatch of October 31, *v. immediately succeeding document*.]

I expressed my satisfaction at learning that His Excellency was pleased with Mr. Balfour's references to the Russian Government. I knew that the Prime Minister had taken great pains in order to do justice to their attitude. As for the references to the Admiral's explanation, it would, to my mind, have been impossible for Mr. Balfour to avoid making it quite clear that we were wholly unable to accept it. The Admiral's explanation was, in effect, an attack upon the manner in which we had conducted ourselves as neutrals, and we were bound to repel it and to show that it had no foundation. I drew a great distinction between a refusal to accept an explanation put forward by a Russian sailor of high rank and a refusal to accept the word of the Russian Government.

I then mentioned to H[is] E[xcellency] a subject which had been much in my thoughts. We had fortunately been able to dispose for the moment of the critical question which had caused us both so much anxiety during the last few days, and I did not see why there should be any difficulty in dealing with the further phases of the case.

I owned however that I lived in dread of new troubles arising. The Russian Government had undertaken to issue instructions to guard against the recurrence of such events as that of the 21st inst[ant] and I felt sure that they would know how to secure compliance with their orders. Count Lamsdorff no doubt realised as thoroughly as we did that it had not been without the greatest difficulty that we had avoided a conflict. In endeavouring to do so we had gone as far as we dared—further than many of our friends would have liked us to go. I would not, in these circumstances, dwell upon the results of a repetition of the North Sea incident.

There was however another peril against which it was our duty to guard. The Russian Fleet was, I understood, about to proceed on its way to the Far East, partly round the Cape and partly through the Suez Canal. If, during its long voyage, the Russian captains considered themselves justified in a wholesale seizure of vessels suspected of carrying contraband, public feeling in this country would become uncontrollable. Important questions of international law, connected with this subject, were at this moment being discussed in no unfriendly spirit between the two Governments. It would be deplorable if at such a time a multitude of British prizes, were seized upon the assumption that the Russian and not the British interpretation of the law was to prevail, and were sent up the Channel and past our shores for adjudication in Russian Prize Courts. I asked H[is] E[xcellency] to say a few words upon this subject to Count Lamsdorff if he thought fit. I was not making any complaint, or asking for any further pledges, but merely giving a friendly warning in the interest of those good relations which Count Lamsdorff was, I knew, as anxious to preserve as I was myself.

Count Benckendorff observed in reply that in his belief the instructions already issued by the Russian Naval Authorities rendered it highly improbable that numerous or arbitrary seizures would be made. His own impression was that the Fleet would proceed to its destination as rapidly as possible without troubling itself about searches for contraband. He promised to write to me upon this subject.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1730.

(No. 548.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 31, 1904.

R. November 8, 1904.

I have the honour to report to Your Lordship that I received at a late hour on the evening of the 29th instant a notification from Count Lamsdorff that His Majesty the Emperor desired to receive me the following day in private audience during the afternoon.

On my arrival at the Palace of Tsarskoe Selo I was immediately received by the Emperor in his private study in a most gracious manner.

His Majesty having told me to sit down on a chair placed close to him at his writing table, said that he had sent for me to have a good talk in a frank and open way, and begged me to be equally frank with him.

His Majesty began by expressing his deep regret and sorrow for the loss of life and the sufferings of the fishermen and their families owing to the most unfortunate and unexpected incident which had occurred in the North Sea. Although it had been anticipated that attacks on the Baltic fleet by paid Japanese Agents were not improbable, it had never occurred to anybody for an instant that the lives and safety of the English fishermen on the North Sea would be in any way compromised by the measures taken for the protection of the squadron from Japanese machinations. As for pecuniary compensation to the many sufferers he could assure me that it would be given on the most liberal scale, in fact anything that was asked would be given. He had noticed that Their Majesties the King and Queen had made gifts of money to the sufferers and their families, and he and the Empress were equally desirous of showing their sympathy and asked me if I thought that he could do so now.

I replied that although I felt sure that His Majesty's generous idea would be much appreciated in England, still I was of opinion that it would be wiser to defer its execution until a moment of greater calm, since it would present an opening for cynical allusions in the press which would naturally be resented here, and which would at the same time cause pain both to the King and to His Majesty's Government. His Majesty said that he quite understood, and begged me to let him know through Count Lamsdorff the proper moment for showing his and the Empress' sympathy with the sufferers.

His Majesty continued that he had two complaints to make.

Firstly, the attitude of the English press had been threatening and over hasty. They had at once accepted the statements of the fishermen, and without admitting the possibility of any explanations of the incident which had occurred, they had demanded the condemnation and punishment of officers of the fleet before they had had an opportunity of being heard.

Secondly, the extensive naval preparations which the actual circumstances of the case did not appear to warrant, and which were of a distinctly provocative character. "What," His Majesty asked, "would people in England have said if, in answer to these naval preparations, I had ordered the mobilization of the Black Sea fleet and of the Caucasian and Turkestan Army Corps, which I should have been quite justified in doing, and what would have been the present position of this question?" His Majesty added that, anxious as he had been to know what really had occurred in the North Sea, he knew that he would have to wait patiently until the arrival of the fleet at Vigo, since, owing to the difference in foreign codes and the consequent difficulty of communicating by wireless telegraphy, the Admiral had been unable to communicate with St. Petersburg from the different telegraph stations on the shores of the channel.

I told His Majesty that I believed the naval preparations were somewhat exaggerated by the press, and that although the attitude of some of the organs of

the English press had. I admitted, been somewhat unnecessarily defiant in tone, it must be remembered and taken into account that the whole of the British nation had been stirred from its very depths by the news of the tragedy in the North Sea. As His Majesty knew, any control of the English press was quite beyond the power of His Majesty's Government, and the press had reflected the feelings of the masses who recognized that no question of politics was involved, but that some of their brothers and fellow workmen while in pursuit of their innocent vocation had been killed and injured, and they called on the Government for protection and reparation. The Government who must naturally be influenced to a certain extent by public opinion had uttered no menaces, but after reporting what had occurred had asked for explanations of the action of the Baltic fleet, intimating at the same time that it was a matter of which the settlement did not admit of delay.

His Majesty assented as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government, but said that the press had now become a tyranny which in foreign politics was capable of great mischief and from which it was difficult to escape.

As to the statements telegraphed by Admiral Rojestvensky,⁽¹⁾ His Majesty expressed his absolute conviction of their sincerity, and that the facts stated by the Admiral would be borne out by the results of the enquiry which would be instituted shortly. The Admiral was in himself a bluff and honest sailor who thought of nothing but his ships and the work which he had been entrusted to carry out. On His Majesty's visit to the fleet at Revel the Admiral had expressed his fears as to the risks which he would run from Japanese attempts to destroy his fleet, and had informed His Majesty that in order to protect his ships from attack he would fire on all others which approached too near, and which he thought entertained hostile designs. I told His Majesty that such action would be entirely contrary to international usage, and would constitute a very grave and serious danger to commercial shipping, especially when the Baltic squadron was passing through narrow seas such as the Channel, which were always crowded with merchant shipping. His Majesty replied that when the fleet of a belligerent is on the high seas it carries with it a state of war, but that he felt confident that no more incidents such as had occurred in the North Sea would take place in the future. Admiral Rojestvensky was of opinion that the danger of secret attack would be greatly diminished as soon as the fleet had left European waters. That the danger was a very real one had been conclusively proved by many facts which had come to light and which had been brought to his notice. Amongst these was the visit of the Japanese Naval Attaché from Berlin to Copenhagen, and the recent arrival of twenty Japanese officers at Hull. I at once interposed that careful enquiry had been made as to the truth of the latter allegation, which had already been made to me by Count Lamsdorff, and that it had been shown to be without foundation.

On His Majesty's alluding to the Commission of Enquiry, I congratulated His Majesty on the happy conception of an idea which had at once put an end to the dangerous phase of the existing controversy. His Majesty replied that he could not take to himself entire credit for the idea since it had been suggested to him by Count Lamsdorff. (This is interesting as showing that Count Lamsdorff evidently took credit to himself for an idea which had been conveyed to Count Benckendorff by Your Lordship.) He considered that the presence of three foreign Admirals, to be associated with the English and Russian Admirals would form the best composition of the Court, and that the Hague would be as good a place as any for the meeting. His Majesty stated that four or five officers had been detached from the squadron at Vigo and would return immediately to St. Petersburg so as to be available for examination before the Court of Enquiry. The fleet itself would proceed at once upon its journey which was absolutely necessary, since any delay would disturb and upset the very complicated arrangements which had been made for coaling the warships at different points.

The Emperor then remarked that he particularly wished to speak to me on the

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 15, No. 16, and p. 21, No. 20, note (3).]

subject of the seizure and release of the "Malacca." His Majesty reminded me that after some negotiation it had been agreed that the "Malacca" should be released on the British Consul at Algiers making a formal declaration that the military stores on board were destined for British naval depôts at Hong Kong and Singapore, and the release of the ship had been granted on the completion of this formality. The further voyage of this vessel had been carefully watched by the Russian Consuls and he had since been informed that the military stores were not disembarked at English ports but that they were forwarded to Japan. I at once told His Majesty that the information on which his statement was based was absolutely false, that neither His Majesty's Government nor I would ever be parties to a fraud of that kind, and that I had actually given to Count Lamsdorff a list of the Admiralty stores which corresponded exactly with the number of cases which the Russian Consul at Malta had announced as being part of the cargo of the "Malacca." His Majesty accepted my statement and remarked that he was pleased to hear that his information was wrong. His Majesty added that some of the other ships which had been taken by the "Petersburg" and "Smolensk" and which had been released had undoubtedly contained contraband of war. I replied that this was quite possible, but that the question in dispute with His Majesty's Government had not been the nature of the cargoes, but the status of the cruiser which effected their capture. I pointed out to His Majesty that a little care and foresight on the part of the Russian Government might without difficulty have prevented the friction which arose in the Red Sea and which at one moment threatened serious developments, since what was illegal for volunteer steamers would have been perfectly legal if Imperial cruisers had been employed in their places. So also it might have been foreseen that the sinking of the "Knight Commander" would raise a storm in England, since His Majesty's Government would never admit the right of a belligerent to sink British ships without trial before a Prize Court. On His Majesty asking how this matter now stood, I explained that it would before long be brought before the Supreme Prize Court, and that it was to be hoped that the verdict of the Court of First Instance would be reversed, since otherwise His Majesty's Government would be compelled to press a claim on the Russian Government for the full value of the ship. His Majesty said that in that case he supposed it would not be settled before the end of the war.

On His Majesty alluding to the question of contraband I said that the Russian Government had published such an unusual list of contraband that it was difficult for any mixed cargo to escape condemnation. They had further carried out their rules in such a harsh manner as to cause considerable losses and intense irritation in British commercial and shipping circles. The advantages gained from such a policy had so far been entirely negative. I added that while His Majesty's Government were pleased that the rules had been relaxed in favour of provisions, I was still waiting for an answer to my representations on the subject of coal. His Majesty at once replied that he had long wanted to tell me that I made a great mistake in pressing for the removal of coal from the list of contraband articles, since it was manifestly to the special interest of Great Britain that coal should be contraband of war. I remarked that His Majesty's Government did not appear to be of that opinion.

I mentioned that Colonel Napier had just returned from Central Asia which he had visited with the assent of the Military Authorities, and that I was pleased to hear from him that there had been no excessive military preparations in Turkestan. His Majesty assured me that that was undoubtedly the case, and that although there had been a slight increase of the military forces to suit local requirements, the number of additional troops was very small. I said that that corresponded more or less with the information in the possession of His Majesty's Embassy. His Majesty added that he ought not to tell me, but that a fortnight ago the Military Authorities asked his permission to make an experimental movement of a full division of troops to Turkestan by the Orenburg-Tashkend line; and that he had refused his consent knowing what a stir such a movement would have made amongst the Military Authorities in England and India.

His Majesty remarked that he was sorry that I had had so many difficult questions to deal with during the few months that I had been here as His Majesty's Ambassador, but that he was very happy to think the critical moments caused by the incident in the North Sea were happily over, and that danger of war had been averted. War between two great Empires such as Russia and England would be an unheard of crime, without gain for either country, since they would be in the same position after the war as before it, only considerably weakened. His Majesty added that he had not forgotten what the King had written, nor the messages with which I had been charged by His Majesty on my arrival as Ambassador, and that although he feared that recent incidents had stirred up feelings which would require some time to subside, he had every confidence that the improvement which he had recently noticed in the mutual relations between England and Russia would be revived.

His Majesty was then pleased to dismiss me.

The Emperor, who had detained me for more than an hour, treated me throughout in a most gracious manner, and was particularly friendly. It is unfortunate that such an interview as that in which I had the honour to take part is a most rare and exceptional occurrence, and His Majesty has therefore to rely in matters relating to foreign affairs solely on the information and opinions of his Representatives and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and it is evident from some of His Majesty's remarks to me that they are not always in accordance with facts.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

An admirable and most interesting Dispatch.

E.R.

No. 25.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1730.

(No. 389.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 31, 1904.

The Russian Ambassador made to me to-day a statement to the following effect:—

His Excellency had been informed yesterday by the Russian Government that orders had been sent to Admiral Rojdestvensky that the officers who would have to be witnesses before the International Commission agreed upon by the British and Russian Governments should be landed at Vigo immediately. These officers should proceed to the place where the Commission was to meet, together with the Admiral appointed to sit as Russian Commissioner.

In these circumstances, there was no reason why a part of the squadron commanded by Admiral Rojdestvensky should remain any longer at Vigo, (and his Excellency hoped that I would authorize him to inform his Government without delay that His Majesty's Government had taken all necessary measures in order that no obstacles should be placed in its way when it quitted Vigo and proceeded to its destination.)

Among the motives which rendered this departure urgent was the desire of the Russian Government not to abuse the hospitality of Spain by violating her neutrality.)

I told his Excellency that the terms of his communication suggested comments, which I proceeded to make.

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2350), pp. 402-4. The passages in round brackets were omitted, and the starred paragraphs somewhat altered.]

I observed, in the first place, that the orders transmitted to Admiral Rojdestvensky had reference only to those officers who would be required to give evidence before the proposed International Commission. I assumed, of course, that this description included not only the officers whose presence as witnesses would be necessary, but those who had been ascertained by the Russian naval authorities to have been responsible for the attack upon the fishing fleet.

I also assumed that the Admiral who was to be designated as Russian Commissioner, and who was to accompany the detained officers, would be an Admiral who had taken no part in the proceedings of the fleet. His Excellency said that there could be no doubt upon this point.

“With regard to the assurance which his Excellency had asked me to give him, I said that, before I could take upon myself to give it, it was necessary that we should be satisfied upon certain points:—

1. We had a right to ask the Russian Government to inform us officially that instructions had been actually issued by the Russian naval authorities to the whole of their fleet for the purpose of avoiding a recurrence of incidents such as that which had occurred in the North Sea. His Excellency would recollect that he had authorized me to inform the Prime Minister that this would be done, and we attached the greatest importance to the point.

2. We had been officially informed by the Russian Government that the Admiral was to remain at Vigo with a portion of the fleet for the express purpose of designating the officers who were responsible for the attack. I gathered from his Excellency's statement that this investigation must already have taken place, with the result that certain individuals had been thus designated, and I had received a telegram from our Ambassador at St. Petersburg informing me that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, who had been pleased to accord an audience to Sir Charles Hardinge, had stated that four or five officers had been detached from the squadron, and would return at once to St. Petersburg. Although it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to assume any responsibility for the selection of the officers who might be designated, we felt sure that the Russian Government would understand our desire to have some information as to the rank and position of those officers. (If the firing upon the fishing-boats took place in consequence of general instructions authorizing such an act, it seemed to us that the list should include the persons who were responsible for the issue of such instructions. If, on the other hand, it was contended that the instructions had been misinterpreted or disobeyed, then the list should include the persons who had been guilty of such misinterpretation or disobedience. The point was of importance, because the Admiral was represented as having said that, in the circumstances, as he reported them, no war-ship could have acted otherwise.⁽²⁾ We should certainly be pressed for information as to the persons detained at Vigo, and I hoped it would not be denied to us. We could, of course, not be content with the selection merely of one or two officers of subordinate positions.)

3. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] considered that the terms of reference to the Int[ernationa]l Commission should be settled immediately and they suggested the enclosed draft which they were prepared to accept in principle.

We considered it essential that the Commission should be authorized to apportion responsibility and blame.

This was indeed a necessary condition, as we understood that the R[ussian] G[overnment] had promised to punish adequately any persons who might be found by the Comm[issio]n to have been responsible for the disaster and to whom, in their opinion blame attached.

The Commission should be convened and should commence and complete its investigations as soon as possible. For this reason we considered that each side should use every effort in order to furnish the Commission with the necessary evidence. It

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 21, No. 20, note (3).]

would be most unfortunate if owing to the absence of important witnesses, the Commission were to find itself obliged to adjourn its proceedings.

(I handed to Count Benckendorff a Memorandum embodying the substance of this despatch.)

**The Russian Ambassador told me that the proposals which I had made to him filled him with apprehension. They would certainly be regarded by the Russian Government as impugning their good faith. (It had been extremely difficult to obtain from them the settlement which had been announced by Mr. Balfour. There was every reason for believing that they were loyally carrying it out at this moment, and an announcement that a part of their Fleet could not safely proceed upon its way to the Far East until further conditions had been complied with would be deeply resented.) H[is] E[xc]cellency was particularly sensitive in regard to the question of the punishment of the officers who were responsible for the incident. I explained to him that, in our view the punishment would have to be inflicted by the Russian G[overnmen]t but that it was indispensable that the Commission sh[ou]ld be authorized to deal with the question of blame. The stipulation was not one-sided, for the defence made by the Russian Admiral was an imputation on the manner in which our neutrality had been observed, as well as upon the conduct of the fishing fleet. (I made a great, but I fear fruitless effort to convince His Excellency of the reasonableness of our demands, and I subsequently addressed to him a letter of which a copy is enclosed.

His Excellency called upon me again in the evening, and told me that he had come to the conclusion that the best thing for him to do was to withdraw altogether his request for an assurance with regard to the safety of the Russian Fleet. He preferred to separate this question entirely from that of the steps to be taken for the purpose of giving effect to the Russian promises. I said that I had no objection to this mode of procedure, and that His Excellency could, if he preferred it, report that, sharing as I did Count Lamsdorff's desire for a speedy adjustment of the difficulties which had arisen, I had pressed for information as to the important points which I had mentioned to him earlier in the day.)

[I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.]

Enclosure 1 in No. 25.

Draft of Proposed Agreement for reference to International Commission of Enquiry.

Whereas during the night of October 21-22 1904 a British steam fishing fleet, while engaged in fishing off the Dogger Bank in the North Sea was fired upon by vessels forming part of the Russian Baltic Fleet, and whereas this action has resulted in the total loss of one of the fishing boats and the death of two persons as well as damage to other vessels of the fleet and injuries to members of the crews of the said fleet, And whereas a difference of opinion has arisen between the Government of His Britannic Majesty and the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia in connection with this incident :

The Undersigned being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments agree that the elucidation of the questions in dispute shall be referred to an International Commission of Inquiry analogous to that provided for in Articles 9-14 of the Convention signed at The Hague on the 29th of July 1899.

It is also hereby agreed as follows :—

ARTICLE I.

The International Commission of Enquiry shall consist of five Commissioners and shall be constituted in the following manner. Two of the Commissioners shall be officers of high rank in the Navies of Great Britain and Russia respectively. The Governments of France and the United States shall each be requested to select one

Commissioner who shall be an officer of high rank in the French and United States' Navies respectively. The fifth Commissioner shall be selected by agreement between the four Commissioners above-mentioned and if they cannot agree the choice shall be entrusted to His Majesty the King of

ARTICLE II.

The Commission shall enquire into and report upon all the circumstances attending the disaster in the North Sea and particularly as to where the responsibility for the disaster lies and the degree of blame which attaches to those upon whom that responsibility is found to rest.

ARTICLE III.

The Commission shall settle in all respects the procedure to be adopted by them for carrying out the duties imposed upon them by this Agreement.

ARTICLE IV.

Each of the High Contracting Parties engage [*sic*] to supply the Commission in the fullest manner possible with all means and facilities necessary to enable it to perform its duties.

ARTICLE V.

The Commission shall meet at Paris as soon as possible after the signature of this Agreement.

ARTICLE VI.

The Commission shall communicate its report to each of the High Contracting Parties.

[*ED. NOTE*.—A subsequent attempt was made by the Russian Government to omit the "responsibility" article, *i.e.*, No. 2. On November 4, however, Count Lamsdorff communicated to Sir C. Hardinge the information that "by the Emperor's orders the six articles were accepted in their entirety" (Despatch No. 563 of November 8, 1904). News of this was sent to Lord Lansdowne in Tel. No. 182 of November 4. Subsequently some attempts to revise the wording of the articles were made by the Russian naval authorities. Further discussion, which ended on November 15, produced an addition to Article II (*v. infra*, pp. 36-7, *Ed. note*, and No. 28, *note* (2).)]

Enclosure 2 in No. 25.⁽³⁾

Substance of observations made by Lord Lansdowne to Count Benckendorff on October 31, with reference to the statement communicated by His Excellency on that day.

Lord Lansdowne observed, in the first place, that the orders transmitted to Admiral Rohddestvensky had reference only to those officers who would be required to give evidence before the proposed International Commission. He assumed, as a matter of course, that this description included not only the officers whose presence as witnesses would be necessary, but those who had been ascertained by the Russian Naval Authorities to have been responsible for the attack upon the fishing fleet.

Lord Lansdowne also assumed that the Admiral who was to be designated as Russian Commissioner, and who was to accompany the detained officers, would be an Admiral who had taken no part in the proceedings of the Baltic Fleet.

With regard to the assurance which Count Benckendorff desired Lord Lansdowne to give him, respecting the departure of Admiral Rohddestvensky's squadron from Vigo, Lord Lansdowne said that before he could take upon himself to give it, it seemed to him necessary that certain conditions should be fulfilled.

(3) [This enclosure and the one following were omitted from the Parliamentary Paper, *v. supra*, p. 28, *note* (1).]

1. The Russian Government would, Lord Lansdowne presumed, have no difficulty in giving His Majesty's Government a specific assurance that instructions had been actually issued by the Russian Naval Authorities to the whole of their Fleet for the purpose of avoiding the recurrence of incidents such as that which had occurred in the North Sea. Count Benckendorff would recollect that he had authorised Lord Lansdowne to inform the Prime Minister that this would be done, and His Majesty's Government attached the greatest importance to the point.

2. His Majesty's Government had been officially informed by the Russian Government that the Admiral was to remain at Vigo with a portion of the Fleet for the express purpose of making an enquiry into the facts and designating the officers who were responsible for the attack. Lord Lansdowne gathered from His Excellency's statement that this investigation must already have taken place, with the result that certain individuals had been thus designated, and he had received a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg informing him that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, who had been pleased to accord an audience to Sir Charles Hardinge, had stated that four or five officers had been detached from the squadron and would return at once to St. Petersburg. Although it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to assume any responsibility for the selection of the officers who might be designated, they felt sure that the Russian Government would understand their desire to have some information as to the rank and position of those officers. If the firing upon the fishing vessels took place in consequence of general instructions authorising such an act, it seemed to His Majesty's Government that the list should include the persons who were responsible for the issue of such instructions. If, on the other hand, it was contended that the instructions had been misinterpreted or disobeyed, then the list should include the persons who had been guilty of such misinterpretation or disobedience. The point was of importance, because the Admiral was represented as having said that under the circumstances, as he reported them, no warship could have acted otherwise. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government would certainly be pressed for information as to the persons detained at Vigo, and Lord Lansdowne hoped that it would not be refused. His Majesty's Government could, of course, not be content with the selection merely of a few officers of subordinate positions.

Lord Lansdowne understood that the Russian Government had promised to punish adequately any persons who might be found by the Commission to have been responsible for the disaster, and to whom, in their opinion, blame attached.

It seemed to him necessary that, before going further, the terms of the reference to the International Commission which it had been virtually agreed to appoint should be decided upon, and Lord Lansdowne suggested the enclosed draft, which His Majesty's Government were in principle prepared to accept.

His Majesty's Government joined with the Russian Government in holding that the international Commission should be convoked and should commence and complete its investigations as soon as possible. For this reason they considered that each side should use every effort in order to furnish the Commission with the necessary evidence. It would be most unfortunate if, owing to the absence of important witnesses, the Commission were to find itself obliged to adjourn its proceedings.

Enclosure 3 in No. 25.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Count Benckendorff.

Private.

My dear Ambassador,

Foreign Office, October 31, 1904.

I have repeated to the Prime Minister and discussed carefully with him the observations which you made this evening upon the proposals which I then communicated to you. I can assure you that the last thing which we desire is to make the promises which the Russian Government has given us an occasion for embarrassing them. It must however be noted that these promises have been publicly

repeated by the Prime Minister, and it will be in your recollection that he went out of his way to recognise the promptitude with which the Russian Government dealt with the situation. Every delay therefore, from whatever cause, in giving effect to this arrangement, would be eminently regrettable. But a delay apparently due, in part at least, to the desire of the Russian Government to minimise or depart from its expressed intentions would be most disastrous. If it became known that delay had arisen from this cause, the revulsion of feeling in the country would be uncontrollable. Every effort will therefore be made to keep it secret, but such secrecy cannot be indefinitely maintained.

Nothing has been asked for which is not essential to the rapid completion of the policy to which on Friday last both Governments agreed.

It surely cannot be held that it reflects on the Russian Government to ask whether the orders which they have promised to issue have in fact been issued to the Russian Fleet. A portion of this Fleet seems already to have passed Vigo, and some ships have even entered the Mediterranean. If the views expressed by the Russian Admiral as to the duties of a ship of war really animate this portion of the Fleet, they are, in our opinion, a serious danger to neutrals. It is surely unreasonable to refuse to give us an assurance that new instructions have actually been issued to the Squadron, or to ask that the ships now at Vigo should leave it without such instructions.

The Russian Government have promised that they will themselves punish any persons who may be shown by the International Tribunal to have been worthy of blame. Is it unreasonable to require that in such circumstances the Commission shall, amongst its attributes, be given the duty of apportioning the responsibility for the disaster, and the degree of blame which attaches to those upon whom that responsibility may be found to rest?

As regards the request that the rank and position of the officers retained in Europe shall be disclosed, His Majesty's Government are at a loss to understand why this should be regarded as excessive. They are anxious to co-operate with the Russian Government in the most open and conciliatory manner in order to arrive without delay at the truth, and it need not excite resentment or surprise that they should desire information with regard to so important an element in the forthcoming enquiry as the retention of those persons who were witnesses of what occurred or were responsible for it.

As regards the suggestion that a guarantee should be given that no difficulty shall arise between the Fleets of the two nations, how is it possible that this should be done so long as obstacles of so unexpected a kind arise the moment an attempt is made to carry out, in perfect good faith and with the most anxious desire to do nothing which might wound the susceptibilities of the Russian Government, an arrangement the principles of which have not merely been agreed on, but made public to all the world?

[Yours sincerely,
LANSDOWNE.]

No. 26.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1730.

(No. 569.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. November 7, 1904.

R. November 14, 1904.

On the 4th instant telegrams were received by the telegraphic Agencies in St. Petersburg announcing that Admiral Rojestvensky's detachment of battleships had been followed by a detachment of British Cruisers from Vigo to Tangier, a distance of five miles separating the two squadrons of which all the ships were cleared for action.

[16942]

D

In view of the fact that the negotiations of the terms of the Convention for the submission of the North Sea Incident to an International Commission of Enquiry were, as far as I should judge, proceeding satisfactorily, though somewhat slowly, the text of the six principal articles being accepted the same evening without modification, I could not but feel that, in the event of the contents of the telegrams being true, the naval measures in question, which could scarcely be considered of a friendly nature, were such as to create a very bad impression in Russia and, if repeated, might even constitute a serious danger to the maintenance of peace. As a matter of fact, this news was the subject of general comment in St. Petersburg and caused, I am informed, great irritation even amongst those who are not ordinarily ill disposed towards England.

In order to realize the effect of such measures it must be remembered that the mental equilibrium of public opinion in Russia has been much disturbed during the present year by a series of unexpected events which a year ago would have been thought impossible. That a small and despised country such as Japan, with a population described by the Russian press as "yellow monkeys" should be able to defeat by land and sea the military and naval forces of the greatest military power in Europe has been a blow from which the country is still reeling and from which it will with difficulty recover. That the Japanese should have been able to achieve these results alone is regarded by the majority of the population as absurd. The educated classes consider that, had there been no Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan would never have dared to go to war with Russia, while the lower classes are firmly convinced that the explanation of the Russian defeats is to be found in the fact that England is surreptitiously aiding the Japanese and that her officers are to be found fighting in their ranks. Consequently there is a very widespread feeling throughout this country that England is the real but secret enemy of Russia and that the simplest means of assuring future peace with a preponderating influence in the Far East would be to attack England in Afghanistan and India, a campaign which no Russian doubts for a moment could result in anything but a complete success for the Russian arms. Thus a war with England would at first be undoubtedly popular since not only is victory considered to be assured, but also territorial extension and a large war indemnity, while it is fully realized that there is nothing to be obtained even if after years of struggle Japan is eventually overcome.

The internal condition of Russia is at the same time in a critical state of effervescence. The elements of progress and reform have been captivated by Prince Mirsky's reported liberal ideas, and greater expectations have been raised than are likely to be realized. On the other hand the reactionary party headed by the Grand Dukes Serge and Alexander Michailovitch are greatly disturbed by the prospect of reforms and the propagation of liberal ideas, and a popular war with England would probably be welcomed by them as a means of distracting public attention. I shall have the honour of treating this subject more fully in a separate despatch.

At the same time discontent poverty and suffering are everywhere rife, and more especially in the districts where the reserves have been mobilized.

The war party, led by nearly all the Grand Dukes and fostered by society and the *technovniks*, is very powerful, and owing to greater opportunities they have more chance than others of influencing the Emperor in favour of their warlike views. They are waiting impatiently for a real Russian success, but they fully realize at last that the Russian army has no easy task before it in the Far East, and that the line of least resistance would be in Central Asia. In this way the prestige lost in the Far East might be recovered nearer home.

The navy on the other hand clearly understand the certainty of the destruction of the Baltic Fleet in the event of an outbreak of war with England. For that reason they, though bitterly hostile, would be ready to make any sacrifice to avoid war, and I have reason to believe that if Admiral Rojestvensky had given almost any other explanation of the action of his ships in the North Sea, he would have been relieved of his command. They also realize that in the event of war with England such ships

as remained of the Russian navy could only find safety within fortified harbours, and that in such a struggle the Russian naval forces could take no part. The public regard the departure of the Baltic Fleet as a forlorn hope, they are confident that it will be stopped on the way by our fleet, and are more or less indifferent to its fate. They do not believe in its arriving in the Far East in time to save the fall of Port Arthur, and they are reconciled to the loss of the fortress, the national honour being saved, by the very gallant defence made by the garrison. There is no doubt that in years to come the defence of Port Arthur will be celebrated as a national triumph in the same way that the siege of Sebastopol is now fêted.

These are some of the reasons which, apart from the excitement caused by the incident in the North Sea and the naval preparations made by His Majesty's Government, have for some time influenced the minds of the public, but it has only been during the last fortnight that these ideas have taken concrete form and I can assure Your Lordship without exaggeration that on the 27th and 28th of October an extremely bellicose feeling prevailed amongst all classes in St. Petersburg, who were firmly convinced of the truth of the Admiral's telegrams and of the connivance of England in the alleged attacks by Japanese torpedo boats on the Baltic fleet; I have also reason to believe that owing to the constant misrepresentation in the press of British aims and policy war with England would have been welcomed throughout Russia.

If such a war occurred, I feel convinced that the first opportunity would be seized by the Russian Government to patch up peace with Japan and to thus put an end to an extremely unpopular war, and so free the Russian Army to concentrate its entire energy and forces in a determined attack on India. The network of railways converging on Orenburg and the Caspian make the transport of troops and war material a task of small difficulty as compared with those experienced in Manchuria, and the *casus fœderis* upon which the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is based would not arise if the *casus belli* were found to exist in an incident similar to that which occurred in the North Sea.

Although the danger of our country being plunged into war appears for the moment to have been happily averted, it is, I regret to say, more than probable that some fresh incident may before long occur by which public opinion may become once more inflamed, and in drawing Your Lordship's attention to the very excitable frame of mind of Russian public opinion, I would venture to point out the great risk which may at any moment be incurred of a long and costly war by an action having the semblance of menace or humiliation, the Russian Government being at the present moment exceptionally sensitive as to their dignity as a Great Power owing to their reverses in the Far East and to their prescience of the possibly still more hopeless position in which they may find themselves before many weeks are over if a decisive victory is not achieved.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A very interesting dispatch and one that raises serious reflections for certain eventualities.

E.R.

No. 27.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. Russia 1731.

(No. 574.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 15, 1904.

The French Ambassador called upon me today at my request, and I informed him of the difficulty which had arisen in consequence of Count Lamsdorff's intimation that he desired to recast the draft Convention (North Sea incident) and to make certain alterations in the text. I called His Excellency's attention to these alterations, and informed him of the substance of my telegram No. 208 of the 14th instant⁽¹⁾ to Sir Charles Hardinge. His Excellency expressed great concern at the hitch which had occurred. He had left Paris yesterday, and when he last saw M. Delcassé had found him firmly convinced that everything had been satisfactorily settled.

We had some conversation as to the proposed Russian amendments, and His Excellency made no secret of his opinion that exception might be taken to Article II of the British draft⁽²⁾ upon the ground that it imposed upon the International Commission duties which it could not properly perform consistently with the terms of the Hague Convention. I pointed out to him that we had made it clear that in our view the International Commission was to be analogous to the Commissions contemplated by the Convention and not identical with them, and that the Agreement accepted by the Russian Government was in fact worded in this sense. His Excellency thought that the word "blame" had for the Russian Government a different meaning to that which it possessed for us. "Blâme," in French, carried with it the idea of punishment, and its proper equivalent in English was probably "censure." He thought that the drafting of the Article might be altered in a way which would give effect to our meaning and at the same time be acceptable to the Russian Government. I replied that in our view it was out of the question now to alter the words of the Article, which I had read textually during the course of my recent speech at the Guildhall. His Excellency evidently realised the force of this argument.⁽³⁾

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, *Ed. note.*]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 31, No. 25, *encl.* 1.]⁽³⁾ [The rest of this despatch refers to the Russian Volunteer Fleet and is printed, *infra*, pp. 56-7, No. 54.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On November 14, Lord Lansdowne telegraphed to Sir C. Hardinge (No. 208) that he regretted Count Lamsdorff's revival of the discussion as to the terms of the Agreement. "Even if we had no objection to alter the Articles in accordance with Count Lamsdorff's suggestions, it would be impossible for us to do so, in view of the fact that the most important Article, the language of which he now proposes to amend, was quoted by me textually at the Guildhall banquet." The article in question was the second.

Some further attempts were made by the Russian Government to alter the wording of the six articles and two additional ones, but these were all frustrated as the following telegram shows.]

No. 28.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1731.

Tel. (No. 209.) P.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, November 18, 1904.*

Draft Convention.

The proposed Russian form of Article II which I sent in my immediately preceding telegram of this evening embodies as Your Lordship will observe, the original text of

⁽¹⁾ [The original of this paraphrase cannot be traced.]

our draft with the addition that the Commission will enquire as to the responsibility and degree of blame which should attach to any persons, whether subjects of Great Britain, Russia or of other countries.

The fact that subjects of Great Britain Russia and other countries have been mentioned has apparently removed the feeling underlying the opposition of the Russian Government that the word "blame" was aimed at Russian officers alone.

This addition to Article II which I trust will meet with the approval of His Majesty's Government was suggested in the summary of Your Lordship's telegrams which I handed to Count Lamsdorff yesterday afternoon, and copy of which I forwarded in my despatch No. 608 of to-day's date,⁽²⁾ and for which I accept entire responsibility.

I have reason to believe that Count Lamsdorff would raise no objection to the draft being made into a Convention or Agreement should His Majesty's Government agree to accept it; his object in calling it a Declaration being to save time by avoiding the necessity of giving full powers.

I think that it may now be said that Y[our] L[ordship]'s text has been integrally accepted and if there is no other serious objection to the Russian draft, I think that it might be as well to accept it.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It describes Sir C. Hardinge's conversation with Count Lamsdorff of November 16, and encloses précis of Lord Lansdowne's telegrams, No. 208, *v. supra*, *Ed. note*, and Nos. 209 and 210 of November 15.]

No. 29.

Draft Convention.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir C. Hardinge, No. 606 of November 18, 1904.)

Projet.

F.O. Russia 1731.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[éria]l de Russie et le Gouv[ernemen]t de S[a] M[ajesté] Britannique, s'étant mis d'accord pour confier à une Commission Internationale d'enquête, réunie conformément aux Art[icle]s 9-14 de la Convention de La Haye du 17/29 juillet 1899, pour le règlement pacifique des conflits internationaux, le soin d'éclaircir par un examen impartial et consciencieux les questions de fait se rapportant à l'incident qui s'est produit durant la nuit du 8-9 (21-22) Octobre 1904 dans la Mer du Nord,—au cours duquel le tir des pièces de canon de la flotte russe occasionna la perte d'un bateau et la mort de deux personnes appartenant à une flotille de pêcheurs britanniques, ainsi que des dommages à d'autres bateaux de ladite flotille et des blessures aux équipages de quelques uns de ces bateaux les Soussignés, dûment autorisés à cet effet, sont convenus des dispositions suivantes.

ARTICLE 1.

La Commission internationale d'Enquête sera composée de cinq membres (Commissaires) dont deux seront des officiers de haut rang des Marines Imp[éria]le Russe et Britannique respectivement. Les Gouv[ernemen]ts de France et des États-Unis d'Amérique seront priés de choisir, chacun, un de leurs officiers de marine de haut rang comme membre de la Commission. Le cinquième membre sera élu d'accord par les quatre membres susmentionnés.

Dans le cas où il ne se produirait pas d'entente entre les quatre commissaires pour le choix du cinquième membre de la Commission, celui-ci sera choisi par S[a] M[ajesté] le

Chacune des deux Hautes Parties contractantes nommera également un jurisconsulte-asseesseur avec voix consultative et un agent, chargés à titre officiel de prendre part aux travaux de la Commission.

ARTICLE 2.

La Commission devra faire une enquête et dresser un rapport sur toutes les circonstances relatives à l'incident de la Mer du Nord, en particulier, sur la question où gît la responsabilité et sur le degré de blâme concernant les ressortissants des deux Hautes Parties contractantes ou d'autres pays, dans le cas où leur responsabilité se trouverait constatée par l'enquête.

ARTICLE 3.

La Commission fixera les détails de la procédure qui sera suivie par elle pour l'accomplissement de la tâche qui lui est dévolue.

ARTICLE 4.

Les deux Hautes Parties contractantes s'engagent à fournir à la Commission Internationale d'Enquête, dans la plus large mesure qu'Elles jugeront possible, tous les moyens et les facilités nécessaires pour la connaissance complète et l'appréciation exacte des faits en question.

ARTICLE 5.

La Commission se réunira à Paris aussitôt que faire se pourra, après la signature de cet arrangement.

ARTICLE 6.

La Commission présentera aux deux Hautes Parties contractantes son rapport signé par tous les membres de la Commission.

ARTICLE 7.

La Commission prendra toutes ses décisions à la majorité des voix des cinq Commissaires.

ARTICLE 8.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[éria]l de Russie garde à sa charge, par réciprocité, les frais de l'enquête faite par lui préalablement à la réunion de la Commission. Quant aux dépenses qui incomberont à la Commission Internationale d'Enquête à partir du moment de sa réunion pour l'installation de ses services et les investigations nécessaires, elles seront faites en commun par les deux Gouvernements.

En foi de quoi les Soussignés ont signé le présent arrangement et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait en double à , le Novembre, 1904.

[ED. NOTE.—There were a few verbal alterations in the instrument which was ultimately signed on November 12/25 at St. Petersburg by Sir Charles Hardinge and Count Lamsdorff, *v. A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2328), pp. 361-8. The Commission subsequently sat at Paris, consisting of a French President, with representatives of Russia, Great Britain and the United States already provided, and an Austro-Hungarian representative nominated for the occasion. The Report was presented on February 25, 1905, and made public. It was generally unfavourable to the Russian side, and £65,000 was paid by Russia to the British Government on March 9 "in full satisfaction of all claims for compensation to the sufferers from the incidents of the 21st October." The text of the Commissioners' Report is in *A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2382), pp. 437-45. For a Russian view of the Dogger Bank incident and ensuing discussions at Paris, *v. Baron M. de Taube: La Politique Russe d'avant-guerre et la Fin de l'Empire des Tsars.* Paris (1928). ch. I. *v.* also Agnes Fry: *A Memoir of Sir Edward Fry* (1922), pp. 280-92.]

No. 80.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1682.

(No. 689.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. December 17, 1904.

R. December 20, 1904.

I have the honour to report to your Lordship an incident which throws an interesting light on the origin of certain reports which have been circulated in the European press with a view to creating an unfavourable impression on foreign opinion towards Great Britain and Japan.

A certain notorious adventurer of the name of Notowitch, who has completed a sentence of imprisonment passed on him by the Russian Consular Court in Constantinople, and who, although resident in Paris, calls himself a secret Russian Agent in London, appears to have addressed to General Hesse, the Officer in Command of the Head-quarters Staff at St. Petersburg, and consequently occupying one of the most prominent positions at the Court, a communication containing grave accusations against Viscount Hayashi and the Japanese Government in the matter of the death of the German and French Naval Attachés near Port Arthur, and also a statement which appeared in the "Standard" of the 14th instant containing serious accusations against British subjects, and against the British Government by implication, in the matter of the Hull incident.

Similar information appears to have been sent to the editor of the "Novoe Vremya," by whom it was communicated to a French correspondent, who telegraphed it to the "Echo de Paris" and to the "Standard."

The communication in question was telegraphed back to St. Petersburg by Reuter's Agency, who, from the published text, appear to have dated the telegram from Copenhagen, the 13th December.

On the 15th instant—i.e., two days later—this telegram was communicated to the St. Petersburg press with the Copenhagen date, but without allusion to the source from which the information was derived. As your Lordship is aware, the telegraphic news which is published in this country is subject to the strictest censorship. The agency which published this telegram is the "Agence Russe," an agency of which the editor of the "Novoe Vremya" is one of the Directors, and of which the President is M. Sabarin, Counsellor of the Russian Foreign Office, and the First "Fonctionnaire attaché à la Chancellerie du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères," while the Principal Manager, M. Teploff, is in close connection with the "Novoe Vremya."

The censorship, so far as it concerns the Russian Foreign Office, is under the personal direction of M. Hartwig, Head of the First Department, who is responsible for all telegrams published in Russia relating to foreign affairs, which he personally supervises before publication.

As a further indication of the manner in which this obviously false information was brought to the notice of the Russian public it is interesting to note that M. Vesselitzky, the London correspondent of the "Novoe Vremya," stated in a telegram, published in that paper on the 15th instant, that news was received from Copenhagen confirming the rumour current in London as to four Japanese torpedo-boats, "of which two attacked our squadron in Danish waters, and two in English," no mention being made of the so-called confirmation having been published in the "Standard," nor of its having come from St. Petersburg. M. Vesselitzky thus continues to propagate a story originated by the notorious Notowitch, which was known not only by the "Novoe Vremya," but also by the "Russ," to be a gross forgery, and this information, in order to conceal its true origin, was communicated to the correspondent of the "Standard" as coming from Copenhagen, and M. Vesselitzky now alludes to the telegram of the "Standard" as independent corroboration of the story.

In this guise, and while its real origin was suppressed, Reuter's telegram passed the censorship of one of the highest officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and was communicated to the Russian press.

I have considered it my duty to draw your Lordship's attention to this matter as an example of how charges are made and disseminated against England and His Majesty's Government in the Russian press with the tacit connivance of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

An extract in translation from the "Russ." giving the origin of this report, is herewith inclosed.⁽¹⁾

In this connection it is interesting to note that the same telegraphic agency, the "Agence Russe," published a telegram purporting to give the substance of your Lordship's Mansion House speech, which contained a gross mistranslation, and which was the origin of a press campaign against England of exceptional violence.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

This is most disgraceful! Could not Count Benckendorff be informed of it?

E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 31.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 579.

(No. 364.) Confidential.

Tôkiô, D. December 22, 1904.

My Lord,

R. January 26, 1905.

A few days ago I had the opportunity of an interesting conversation with Count Katsura, the Prime Minister, at which the Minister for Foreign Affairs was also present.

Speaking of the North Sea outrage, the Prime Minister said that, when the Japanese Government heard of the departure of the Russian Fleet from Vigo, they experienced a feeling of disappointment, in that the Admiral had not been detained, for they held that he was the responsible man, for, without his sanction, they deemed it impossible that a single shot could be fired; they, however, now understood that, owing to the friendly understanding that we had with France, we could hardly insist upon making this demand, which might have led to the gravest consequences, and, in addition, would have interfered with our friendly relations with that Power.

I said that doubtless His Majesty's Government had this in view during the negotiations with Russia, which immediately followed the North Sea incident, but I added that, according to latest advices from home, I understood that the Admiral and several officers of the Baltic squadron declared that they had fired on two torpedo boats, presumably Japanese, which had sallied forth from the fleet of trawlers, one of which had been sunk, and the other had taken refuge behind the trawlers. Both the Prime Minister and Baron Komura were much amused at this information, which, they said, they had seen in the newspapers, but had not treated seriously. Of course, if the Russian officers had so stated, a commission of enquiry was necessary. Count Katsura added that "the Baltic Fleet had most certainly not met any Japanese torpedo boats in the North Sea, but there was every likelihood of their so doing in the Indian Ocean" !

The conversation turned upon the state of public opinion in St. Petersburg, which, according to telegraphic news received from Europe, was becoming more friendly to Japan, some of the Russian newspapers openly advocating an alliance between Russia and Japan after the war. The Prime Minister said that in Japan there was no desire whatever of this kind,—indeed, it was hoped that, should the war end successfully for Japan, the present Anglo-Japanese Alliance might be strengthened and extended.

The Japanese people were most grateful for the many courteous and friendly acts which Great Britain had shewn them, and would never forget the great sympathy which the British people had evinced in many ways towards them in their hour of trial. Turning to me, the Prime Minister said, "I should like you to express to Your Government that Japan and the Japanese Government are entirely satisfied with the extremely correct manner in which England has carried out her obligations as a neutral, and the particularly friendly manner in which she has, without overstepping the bounds of neutrality, fulfilled her obligations as an ally."

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

III.—THE STRAITS QUESTION AND THE RUSSIAN VOLUNTEER FLEET, 1903-1904.(1)

[ED. NOTE.—The question of the passage of Russian Warships through the Dardanelles had already been raised early in 1903. In August, 1902, the Russian Government asked permission to send four torpedo-boats through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to join the Black Sea Fleet. On September 19, the Sultan granted the request on condition that the boats should not carry armaments or a war crew; that they should fly the commercial flag; that they should pass the Straits separately with an interval of twenty-four hours; and that they should comply with the rules applicable to merchantmen. These conditions were accepted. On January 6, 1903, Sir N. O'Connor presented to the Porte a British note dated January 1, complaining of a breach of treaty obligations, and announced that Great Britain would demand the same privilege if occasion arose. See, generally, Coleman Phillipson and Noel Buxton: *The Question of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles* (1917), pp. 167-70. For the bearing of the Treaty of 1856 on this question, v. Sir Charles Hardinge's memorandum, pp. 58-60, *Ed. note*. It seemed necessary to collect the material here, though the passage of the Straits by the Russian Volunteer Fleet during the war naturally accentuated matters. For the Straits question (1899-1903), v. *G.P. XVIII*, I, ch. 119, and for these incidents, *XIX*, I, ch. 132. v. also S. A. Adamov: *Constantinople i prolivi*. Moscow (1925). 2 vols.]

No. 32.

Sir R. Rodd to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 9.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Rome, D. January 9, 1903.

R. January 15, 1903.

I have the honour to report that, on receipt of Your Lordship's telegram No. 12, of the 7th instant,(2) I lost no time in seeing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and conveyed to him the substance of Your Lordship's message, urging, in view of the

(1) [The Volunteer Fleet was created during the war with Turkey in 1877-8, when Great Britain was expected to intervene. The ships carried the mercantile flag in times of peace, though they were usually employed as transport between the Black Sea and the Far East. Their crews were subject to naval training and discipline, and the two chief officers of each vessel were commissioned by the Government.]

(2) [Not reproduced. It was sent to Sir R. Rodd as No. 12, and to Sir F. Plunkett as No. 3. It contained the following message for the Ministers for Foreign Affairs at Rome and Vienna.

"You should speak at once to Minister for Foreign Affairs and say that while H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] have deferred to objections raised by Austrian Gov[ernment] to an identic or simultaneous communication they feel strongly that the effect of entire absence or long postponement of Austrian and Italian support will be deplorable.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] have been led to believe that both Austria and Italy attached great importance to the maintenance of the rule of the Straits, and were anxious for the discussion of a joint policy in the Mediterranean based on the maintenance of the *status quo*. If on this occasion they leave us unsupported it will be necessary for us to reconsider our position in regard to the whole question.

It will be impossible to refuse information to Parliament as to the cooperation which we were encouraged to expect, and the impression produced by a retreat from the assurance we received will be most unfortunate."

engagements given by the Austrian and Italian Governments, that the representation made by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople respecting the passage of the Dardanelles by Russian torpedo-destroyers should not be left any longer unsupported, and pointing out the inevitable results which would be entailed by a withdrawal from the line of policy which the two Governments had agreed to adopt.

Signor Prinetti begged me to assure Your Lordship that he had in no way contemplated any modification in the action he had agreed to take; the Italian Ambassador in Constantinople had his instructions on which he would act without any alteration or delay, the moment the conditions preliminary to such action were fulfilled.

But his undertaking to make a representation in the terms agreed upon had been given on the understanding that not only His Majesty's Government but also the Austro-Hungarian Government would take similar action, and, as I should remember, Italy had agreed to present her communication to the Porte immediately after the Austrian communication had been made.

He had recently had a conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador here, and he gathered that the Austrian Government was conscious of the obligations resting on them. In view of the general understanding between the Austrian and Russian Governments which had resulted from Count Lamsdorff's visit to Vienna, Count Goluchowski no doubt found himself somewhat awkwardly situated, but the impression he had derived from this conversation was that if pressure were exercised at Vienna the Austrian Government would act up to its undertakings.

I remarked that the representation it was proposed to make was after all couched in very moderate terms and was, it seemed to me, in no way hostile to Russia. Signor Prinetti replied that to remind Turkey of her Treaty obligations in this matter, had certainly no colour of hostility to Russia, so long as the representations made had a more or less collective character, which, he maintained, they would have so long as the three Governments in question acted together. Germany had assumed the pose of being disinterested in the Eastern problems. France followed the lead of Russia for obvious reasons. There remained Great Britain Italy and Austria-Hungary as Powers directly interested, and entitled to act together in the sense agreed upon. If Austria fell out it made a considerable difference, and rather accentuated the action of any other power which made a protest against the exceptional treatment accorded to Russia. In such an eventuality, he would have to seriously consider once more the line which Italy ought to adopt. He would not definitely refuse to act, and would prefer for the present not to pronounce himself in one sense or the other, because he still felt every hope that the Austrian Government would not refuse to carry out their obligation. But had Austria been unwilling from the first, he could not conceal from me that he would have reflected much longer before he accepted the idea of joining in a remonstrance over this particular point.

Nevertheless, the policy of Italy was, and is, the maintenance of the *Status quo*, and he was ready and even anxious to enter upon an exchange of views with the British and Austrian Governments as to the best means for maintaining it. He gathered that the Austrian Government were now endeavouring to make out that their readiness to engage in such an exchange of views, was confined to the particular point of the passage of the Dardanelles. He had not understood it in this limited sense, and he was prepared, if Austria withdrew, to exchange views on the whole situation established by the existing treaties with His Majesty's Government alone, with a view to upholding the maintenance of the *Status quo* in the East. He believed there was no divergence of view between the policy which found favour in Italy and that which would have the support of His Majesty's Government, with whom it was his desire to act in harmony. I have transmitted the substance of this despatch to your Lordship by telegraph.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 10.)

My Lord,

Vienna, D. January 9, 1903.

R. January 19, 1903.

Your Lordship's Telegrams Nos. 2 and 3⁽¹⁾ reached me the night before last. I called yesterday on Count Goluchowski and informed him that His Majesty's Ambassador had made already some days ago a remonstrance to the Porte against the permission granted for the passage of Russian Torpedo Destroyers. This remonstrance had been made by Sir Nicholas O'Connor in the terms already known to the Austro-Hungarian and the Italian Governments, but nevertheless their Ambassadors so far had not taken any action in support of the British remonstrance, as the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador was still without instructions, and the Italian Ambassador, being instructed to act in concert with his British and Austro-Hungarian Colleagues, had not yet made any representation.

I told Count Goluchowski that I had received a telegram from Your Lordship desiring me to say that, while His Majesty's Government deferred to the objection raised by His Excellency to an identic or simultaneous representation being made to the Porte in regard to the passage of these Russian Torpedo Destroyers, they felt very strongly that the effect of the entire absence or long postponement of Austro-Hungarian and Italian support would be deplorable.

I said that Your Lordship had fully expected, both from what first Count Mensdorff and afterwards Count Deym had said in London, and from what His Excellency himself had said to me last November, that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador would also make some kind of representation to the Porte against the passage of these vessels.

Count Goluchowski replied that he had never taken any engagement to make representations at any special moment; he said he had undertaken to examine the question and to call the attention of the Porte at a suitable time to the serious objections which exist to the Sultan's permitting the passage. He claimed that he had always insisted that he objected to any joint or identic action in a matter of such relatively small importance, and had always reserved the right to examine the matter more thoroughly and to take action when he judged the moment opportune. He added that he had since carefully examined the legal aspect of the question, and he had been led to think that the Sultan might claim that the letter of the Treaties, as subsequently altered in 1871, justified his present action, however great might be the political objections to his exercising his right on this occasion.

I need not record in detail the long discussion which took place, in the course of which I laid great stress on the fact that, if His Majesty's Government did not now receive the support which they had been given reason to expect from that of Austria-Hungary, they might be forced to reconsider their position in regard to the discussion of the joint policy in the Mediterranean which His Excellency had advocated.

His Excellency assured me that he was still ready and anxious to come to an understanding with Great Britain for the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, and he rejected the imputation that Austria-Hungary was in any way leaving His Majesty's Government in the lurch by not having so far made representations to the Porte about the Russian Torpedo Destroyers. His Excellency maintained that this was a question of very minor importance in comparison to that of preventing, if possible, the outbreak of insurrection this spring in Macedonia. The whole world knew that an effort was now being made by the Governments of Austria-Hungary and of Russia to elaborate a draft of scheme for improving the Turkish administration of the Macedonian provinces. When this scheme had been completed, which he hoped would be soon, it would be communicated to the Powers who had signed the Treaty of

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 41, No. 32, note (²).]

Berlin, and meanwhile the attention of the Porte had been sufficiently called by the English note to the objections which exist to allowing the passage of small unarmed Russian vessels through the Dardanelles. Therefore, he must continue, in spite of all I had said, to think that this was not an opportune moment for Austria-Hungary to make the same representations, but he reserved to himself to make these representations later if he saw the utility of doing so. His Excellency said he had seen with pleasure that the British Ambassador had made his representations, for this act constituted a public proof that Great Britain still takes a serious interest in the affairs of the Near East, a point on which European Cabinets had latterly entertained considerable doubt.

I again impressed strongly on Count Goluchowski the very bad effect produced in London by the absence of Austrian support on this occasion, but I could obtain nothing further from His Excellency than an expression of regret at the misconception which had arisen and a vague statement that he would examine whether the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Constantinople could still offer any useful assistance to his British Colleague at this stage of the affair. I reminded him that the question was urgent and that there was no time to be lost.

I have, &c.

F. R. PLUNKETT.

No. 34.

Sir R. Rodd to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 11.) Confidential.

Rome, D. January 10, 1903.

My Lord,

R. January 17, 1903.

With reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 9th instant⁽¹⁾ on the subject of the passage of the Dardanelles by Russian torpedo-destroyers and the proposed remonstrance to be communicated to the Porte, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I have had this morning a further interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the present attitude of Austria. I will endeavour for clearness sake to recall the substance of His Excellency's remarks in a succinct and continuous narrative, without troubling Your Lordship with my own share in the conversation.

Signor Prinetti began by reading me a passage from an article in the "Pesther [sic] Lloyd"—of what date he did not inform me—on the subject of Great Britain's renewed interest in the Eastern question, the patronising tone of which, not to use a stronger expression, had he said, made a disagreeable impression upon him, seeing that the journal in question was looked upon as receiving official inspiration. The attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Government, in the matter of the remonstrance, was, he admitted, unfortunate. He had already explained to me that, so far as Italy was concerned, he had been quite prepared to let her be one of three powers acting together at Constantinople in the sense suggested. But he was reluctant that she should be one of two only, because action by a minority seemed to accentuate the appearance of hostility to Russia, which he was desirous not to display in view of the excellent relations now existing between the Italian and Russian Governments.

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires in London had telegraphed a suggestion put forward by Your Lordship that he should join in using his influence at Vienna to induce the Austro-Hungarian Government to act up to their engagements. This Signor Prinetti said he would willingly do for every reason. He would see the Austrian Ambassador today and would urge upon him how unfortunate an effect it would have if Great

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 41-2, No. 32.]

Britain were left isolated in her action at Constantinople. He preferred to work through the Austrian Ambassador here, who had in an interview a few days before used language which encouraged him to take up the subject again, because the Italian Ambassador at Vienna was not in good health and might be unable to take action personally without delay, and also because he thought he could bring stronger influence to bear by himself dealing with the matter here. He thought, if the Austrian Government were unwilling now to abide by the prearranged representation, it would not be absolutely necessary that they should do more than mark in some way their sense of the new precedent created. This at any rate would suffice to enable him to act. It would even be enough if they merely asked for explanations of the circumstances under which the sanction had been given. If this were done he would instruct the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople to lose no time in making the message agreed upon in its original form.

He could see no reason why the Austrian Government should not, if they thought it desirable to deprecate any semblance of hostility, explain to the Russian Government the grounds for their action, which were in reality rather in the nature of a protest to the Porte against the assumption that Turkey could, without consulting the other Powers, take it upon herself to interpret Treaties, to which those powers are parties. That was the way in which he regarded the matter and he would have no hesitation in telling the Russian Government so.

Signor Prinetti then went on to say that since he had seen me two days ago, he had reflected not a little on the question of an exchange of views between the British and Italian Governments—assuming that Austria-Hungary was now disposed to withdraw from the position adopted by Count Goluchowski previous to Count Lamsdorff's visit, as he, not less than Your Lordship, had understood it. The more he had thought it over the more favourably the idea had impressed him. He was convinced from the news he had received from Vienna that Russia and Austria had come to an understanding based on the maintenance of the *status quo*, at any rate for the immediate future. He had reason to believe that Count Lamsdorff had convinced Count Goluchowski that Russia was sincere in the adoption of this policy, which Austria was bound to welcome, and what was now going on with regard to the Dardanelles question at Vienna, confirmed him in this view.

What was the position of the other Great Powers? France in all such questions as these would, he felt sure, blindly follow the lead of Russia. Germany had publicly proclaimed an attitude, which she had found it suited her material interests at Constantinople to assume, of disinterestedness in Balkan questions.

Great Britain and Italy, so far as he could see had both the same object in view. The policy of Italy with regard to the Balkans might be summed up as follows; "*L'Italie n'a pas de convoitises mais elle s'opposera aux convoitises des autres.*" Therefore her interest was the maintenance of the *status quo* for as long a period as possible. Should the course of events however make a disturbance inevitable, then his motto was, "the Balkans for the Balkan populations."

I was not a little interested to hear from Signor Prinetti's lips so clear and categorical a pronouncement. For the action of Italy of recent years in Albania has given colour to the supposition that she was there engaged in preparing the ground for any eventuality by the extension of her influence through the medium of schools and post offices. At the same time Signor Prinetti's language has always been consistent in maintaining that Italy's real aim and object was to combat the dissemination of Austrian influence in Albania, because she could never view with indifference the extension of a powerful empire to a seaboard in close proximity to Italian shores where she might exercise a preponderating influence in the Adriatic.

Signor Prinetti went on to say that Italy's relations with Russia were now extremely cordial. He was anxious to foster and maintain this cordiality and believing as he did that Russia and Austria were now in agreement, it appeared to him that, if England and Italy could define their position by a friendly exchange

of views, it might become possible for Italy to render service in the character of a conciliating intermediary, and that it was perhaps not too much to hope that a concert of the four powers might result, which would offer the best guarantee for the preservation of order and become a powerful instrument both for the guidance of the Turkish Government, and for keeping the Balkan principalities in hand. He was anxious that Great Britain, with whom Italy desired as far as possible to fall into line, should maintain her active interests in these questions, and felt that the present moment might well be an opportune one for the removal of misgivings and misunderstandings, and if the four Powers could thus range themselves together an useful purpose would be served.

Signor Prinetti's tone throughout was marked by the most cordial feeling towards Great Britain, and in this attitude, he has often assured me he represented the general spirit of the country. I have for some time past felt there were certain appreciable symptoms here of a tendency towards a *revirement* in the foreign leanings of this country. If I am not mistaken, there has of late been less public courting of French goodwill, and there is at the same time no evidence of rekindling enthusiasm for the other partners in the Triple Alliance towards which Italian feeling has sensibly cooled. With all deference therefore I venture to submit that the present time may perhaps afford a happy opportunity for the reaffirmation by an exchange of views of that community of sympathies and interests which is both traditional and acceptable here.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 35.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Constantinople, January 14, 1903.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

D. 8.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 7.)

R. 10.0 P.M.

A Russian torpedo-boat destroyer passed here last night without stopping.

No. 36.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

Foreign Office, January 15, 1903.

Tel. (No. 28.)

D. 4 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 8 (of Jan[uary] 13).⁽¹⁾

Thank M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] for his desire to meet our wishes. A reply upon the lines which he has indicated to you would be desirable. We still however hope that Austria and Italy will find a suitable opportunity for addressing warnings to the Porte.

(¹) [Not reproduced. It describes an interview between Sir R. Rodd and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The latter said notice had been given in the Chamber of a question as to Italy's action. Sir R. Rodd suggested replying in the following sense if Lord Lansdowne agreed "that if Italy had remained silent, it was not to be interpreted as signifying that the action taken by His Majesty's Government (? group omitted), and that her policy in upholding the conditions laid down by existing Treaties remained unaltered, and needed no confirmation."]

No. 37.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.
(No. 39.) Confidential.
My Lord,

Constantinople, D. January 26, 1903.
R. February 2, 1903.

With reference to Sir Nicholas O'Connor's despatch Number 1 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to report that Mr. Block has heard from a reliable source that on the 7th instant the Ottoman Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs stating that having in accordance with instructions asked Count Lamsdorff for his opinion and advice on the question of the passage of the Straits raised by His Majesty's Government, His Excellency had replied that he had already heard of the matter from Monsieur Zinoview, and had added "que l'autorisation accordée par Sa Majesté le Sultan pour le passage de ces coques de navire n'était nullement en contravention des traités existants; les quatre modèles de navires russes, n'étant pas armés et portant pavillon de commerce ne sauraient être considérés comme faisant partie des navires de la catégorie désignés dans la Note de l'Ambassade d'Angleterre."

Count Lamsdorff further assured the Turkish Ambassador "que le cas qui s'était présenté pour le passage des quatre coques en question ne se renouvellera jamais à l'avenir, et que les traités existants concernant les détroits sont et seront toujours respectés aussi bien par la Russie que par les autres Puissances."

I understand that Monsieur Zinoview has used similar language and has given similar assurances to the Porte.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 38.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Pera, February 5, 1903.

F.O. Turkey 5448.
Tel. (No. 25.)

D. 8.5 P.M.
R. 10.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 20.⁽¹⁾

I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon. His Excellency repeated to me in almost the same words the information as to Russian explanations and assurances given in my despatch No. 39,⁽²⁾ and promised to let me have it in writing as an *aide-mémoire* for communication to your Lordship.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.
(No. 91.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, D. February 21, 1903.
R. March 2, 1903.

With reference to Mr. Whitehead's despatch No. 75 of the 11th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to enclose the text of a telegram dated the 8th of January last from the

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It describes an interview between Mr. Whitehead and Tewfik Pasha in which the latter had reported the views of Count Lamsdorff in the same sense as the telegram from the Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg printed on p. 48.]

Ottoman Ambassador at St. Petersburg, on the subject of the passage of the Dardanelles by four Russian torpedo-boat destroyers, which has been communicated to this Embassy by the Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure in No. 39.

Text of Telegram from Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

Monsieur le Comte Lamsdorff, ministre des affaires étrangères en Russie, répondu que les quatre carcasses de navires pour lesquelles l'autorisation de passer par les détroits avait été accordé par S[a] M[ajesté] I[mpériale] le Sultan n'était aucunement en contravention avec les traités existants, ces coques de navires n'étant pas armées et portant pavillon de commerce ne peuvent être considérées comme des navires de la catégorie désignée dans la note de l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre. Son Excellence a déclaré également que la teneur des traités concernant le passage des détroits sera toujours et intégralement observée et respectée aussi bien par la Russie que par les autres Puissances. Le ministère Russe des affaires étrangères a assuré en outre que le cas qui s'est présenté pour le passage de ces quatre modèles de navires ne se renouvellera jamais à l'avenir.

8 Janvier 1903.

No. 40.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5448.

Foreign Office, January 30, 1904

Tel. (No. 26.)

D. 1-30 P.M.

I told the Japanese Minister on Jan[uary] 27 that I was able to inform him in confidence that the Cabinet had approved the Statement I made to him on Jan[uary] 11, namely that we should undoubtedly regard the passage of the Russian Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles in the event of war breaking out, as a gross violation of the Treaty engagements entered into by Russia with us and other Powers, although I could not undertake to say what action we might think it necessary to take by way of response. We were however decidedly of opinion that the contingency was not one which was likely to arise, and there were absolutely no indications that such action was contemplated.

⁽¹⁾ [A somewhat fuller version was telegraphed the same day to Sir Charles Scott at St. Petersburg, v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. II, pp. 241-2, No. 285. It was Tel. No. 38 January 30.]

No. 41.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 47.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. February 4, 1904

My Lord,

R. February 8, 1904

With reference to the subject of Your Lordship's telegram No. 33 of 30th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ and to the evident apprehensions of the Japanese Government that in case of an outbreak of hostilities in the Far East, the Russian fleet in the Black Sea might be ordered to force a passage through the Dardanelles and join the Russian

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

naval forces in the Pacific, I have the honour to report that there is not the slightest indication here of any such intention on the part of the Russian Government.

The Austrian Ambassador in conversation a few days ago, replying to an enquiry as to what effect he thought the implication of Russia in hostilities in the Far East would have on the efficacy of her assistance in case of an outbreak of war in the Balkans, said "none at all," that Russia would certainly keep her present naval forces in the Black Sea strictly within the limits of that sea and ready for any emergency there.

It is possible that the report that Admiral Skrydloff, who is in command of the Black Sea fleet, was coming to St. Petersburg may have given occasion for some comment.

I understand however from Captain Calthorpe that, when he met Admiral Skrydloff last summer in the south of Russia, the Admiral spoke of his intention, if he could get a few weeks' leave of absence, of coming with his wife to St. Petersburg for the Court season, and it is very possible that the Russian Admiralty, knowing the experience acquired in his service in the Far East by Admiral Skrydloff, who is regarded as one of the most efficient Admirals in the Russian service, may have been anxious to consult him in regard to eventual operations in the Pacific.

I shall, however, not fail to keep in mind Your Lordship's instructions in case any occasion should arise for my acting on them.

I have, &c.

CHARLES S. SCOTT.

No. 42.

Question asked in the House of Commons, February 15, 1904.

Parl. Deb., 4th Ser., Vol. 129, p. 1836.

Mr. Gibson Bowles, I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury has the Russian Government approached His Majesty's Government with a request or suggestion that they should consent to Russian men-of-war passing from the Black Sea through the Bosphorous and Dardanelles; in view of the fact that such a passage would be a violation of European Treaties, what attitude will His Majesty's Government take on this point, and can any Papers be laid?

Answer by Mr. Akers Douglas (for Mr. A. J. Balfour).

His Majesty's Government have not been approached with any such request or suggestion. There is no reason whatever for supposing that the Russian Government contemplate a step which would involve a distinct violation of their treaty obligations to the European Powers.

[*ED. NOTE.*—No other Power in fact seems to have protested, and it does not appear that any further steps were taken by Great Britain.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 229.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 29, 1904.

The French Ambassador said a few words to me to-day upon the subject of the relations of Great Britain with Russia. . . .⁽¹⁾ There seemed to me, indeed, to be only one point which might, although I did not think that this was likely, give rise to really serious trouble. I referred to the possibility of an attempt on the part of the Russian Government to send their Black Sea fleet through the Dardanelles. It would be quite impossible for us to acquiesce in such a step, and, if it were taken, we should be driven to meet it by adequate measures which might render a collision inevitable. We had always insisted upon the view that the passage of the Straits must be denied to ships of war, and we had on several occasions protested against minor infractions of these Treaty obligations. The passage of the Straits by a Russian squadron for the purpose of attacking our ally in the Far East could not therefore be tolerated by this country. I rejoiced however to say that, so far as I was aware, there were no signs of any such intention on the part of the Russian Government, and I was indeed under the impression that for many reasons they would be unlikely to wish to send their ships out of the Black Sea at the present time.

I am, &c.

LANDSDOWNE.

(¹) [This despatch is quoted as a whole in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II. p. 401. It is there printed from a draft in F.O. France 3663, and shows the amendments made in it by Lord Lansdowne. The first part of it, referring to King Edward's suggestion of an Anglo-Russian Entente, is also quoted in this volume, p. 189, *Ed. note*. For King Edward's views on the Straits question, expressed in conversation with Sir Charles Hardinge, v. note at the end of the latter's memorandum, p. 60.]

*Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Pera, May 29, 1904.*

F.O. Turkey 5448.

Tel. (No. 95.)

D. 8.25 P.M.

R. 10.50 P.M.

The British steam yacht "Nemesis" was stopped at Dardanelles on the 22nd May on the ground that she carried two Hotchkiss cannon. Upon my representing the matter to the Grand Vizier, he said that if the cannon were landed the yacht would be allowed to pass. I agreed, and he undertook to give orders accordingly, but owing to some delay in their transmission, the yacht was detained three days. I have thus a good excuse for addressing a *note verbale* to the Porte, taking note of Grand Vizier's declaration. It may be useful in future. Does Your Lordship approve?

MINUTE.

Nothing could be more opportune—act as proposed.

L.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Vienna, June 5, 1904.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

Tel. (No. 42.) Secret.

D. 12.45 P.M.

R. 3.10 P.M.

My desp[atch] No. 139/May 31.⁽¹⁾

Japanese Min[iste]r gave me yesterday translation of two documents which had reached him secretly from St. Petersburg, which proved that on April 25th already Russia had approached Turkish Gov[ernmen]t in order to obtain assent of the latter for the passage of ships of the Black Sea Squadron in the Mediterranean. Commander in Chief was told that the Porte had evaded giving a categorical answer but they have given Russia to understand that if operation is carried out with discretion and secrecy they would not make any protest. Commander in Chief was therefore instructed to prepare at once one first-class cruiser, two gunboats and one destroyer, whose names were given, for this Service.

Japanese Min[iste]r asked me whether Japan could rely for certain on the Powers preventing a proceeding in direct contradiction to treaty. I said I had no authority for giving him an official reply, but I felt sure England at all events would view such an attempt with the greatest disfavour.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

Communications should be made with Russian Gov[ernmen]t on this subject.

E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It described a conversation between Sir F. Plunkett and M. Makino of May 29. In answer to a question from M. Makino as to whether he "believed there was no danger of Russia sending her Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean," Sir F. Plunkett replied that "Russia could not take such a step, as it would be directly contrary to the Treaties."]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

Tel. (No. 104.)

Foreign Office, June 7, 1904.

Sir F. Plunkett's Tel[egram] No. 42⁽¹⁾ repeated to you.

If these statements are correct it is most important you should take every opportunity of impressing upon the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that we are closely watching their conduct. Their action in stopping the Yacht Nemesis and compelling her to land her armament implies a most important admission of their obligations to act up to the Treaty.

You should take an early opportunity of saying that the language used by you (see your tel[egram] No. 95 of May 29⁽²⁾) has been approved by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and that we shall certainly expect Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to follow precisely the same course in regard to armed vessels of any other nation attempting to pass the Dardanelles.

I call your attention to the language used by me to French Amb[assado]r on this subject (see my desp[atch] No. 229 of April 29⁽³⁾ to Sir E. Monson sent to you May 10). I have spoken in similar terms to the Russian Amb[assado]r.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 50, No. 44.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 50, No. 43.]

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Pera, June 8, 1904.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

D. 6.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 101.)

R. 10 P.M.

(Russian Black Sea fleet.)

In accordance with instructions of your Lordship's telegram No. 104,⁽¹⁾ I informed Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day that your Lordship approved of the note I had sent to Porte on 30th May, respecting the refusal of the Ottoman Government to allow British Yacht "Nemesis" to pass the Straits of the Dardanelles with cannon on deck,⁽²⁾ that His Majesty's Government had taken cognizance of Grand Vizier's declaration and of procedure followed with regard to British vessels that they were closely watching the Turkish Government's conduct, and that they would certainly expect them to follow precisely the same course in regard to armed vessels of any other nation attempting to pass the Straits.

In reply to my inquiry as to whether a request had been made by a foreign Power for armed ships or ships of war to pass the Straits, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that no such request had been made since the Russian torpedo-boat passed Straits in January 1903. His Excellency authorized me to repeat his statement to your Lordship, and intimated that the Ottoman Government were fully aware of the obligations imposed upon them by international Treaties.

It is very unlikely that the Sultan would allow any ships of Black Sea fleet to pass the Straits without consulting his Minister for Foreign Affairs, but I think it not improbable that the information of the Japanese Minister at Vienna, reported in Sir F. Plunkett's telegram No. 42,⁽³⁾ may be connected with volunteer steamers "Smolensk" and "Petersburg," which were said by His Majesty's Consul-General at Odessa, in his telegram No. 27, to be arming and ready for sea.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 50, No. 44.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 51, No. 45.]

[ED. NOTE.—On June 14 the Turkish Government officially denied the statement in the *Daily Mail* of June 11 that they had authorized the passage through the Straits of 4 Russian battleships and 2 cruisers.]

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 627.

Therapia, D. August 4, 1904, 11 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.) Treaty.

R. August 5, 1904, 9 A.M.

My tel[egram] No. 11 Treaty.⁽¹⁾ Russian volunteer fleet.

Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphs that Count Lamsdorff after an interview with the Czar gave him the most positive assurances that the vessels for passage of which permission was demanded were exclusively vessels of the volunteer fleet, that they would not change that flag during the whole of their voyage and that they would transport neither arms nor munitions of war.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Count Lamsdorff declined however to give a written declaration as he considers formality superfluous inasmuch as the declaration in question is by Emperor's order made by him to Sublime Porte as also by Russian Ambassador at Constantinople and ought therefore to be considered as fulfilling all necessary formalities.

I hear that Porte is inclined to insist on written declaration.

No. 49.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 628.

Tel. (No. 13.) Treaty.

Russian Volunteer steamers.

Therapia, D. August 8, 1904, 11.55 P.M.

R. August 9, 1904, 7 A.M.

The Russian Ambassador, for the reasons already given in my telegram No. 12, Treaty,⁽¹⁾ refused a written declaration respecting the passage through the Straits of the Volunteer steamers, and threatened that ships would pass without further formalities if the Porte delayed their answer. Thereupon the Government decided not to insist further, but to take act of the Ambassador's verbal declaration. The Minister for Foreign Affairs accordingly addressed the following note to the Russian Ambassador this afternoon:—

“Following on the exchange of views which had taken place between the Sublime Porte and the Imperial Embassy respecting the passage through the Straits of the ships of the Volunteer fleet, your Excellency did me the honour to declare to me, by order of and in the name of your Government, that the said ships passing the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles will fly during their whole voyage, as hitherto (*‘hisseront pour tout le temps de leur voyage comme par le passé’*), the commercial flag; that they will not contain either munitions of war or armaments, and that they will not be changed into cruisers (*‘transformé en croiseurs’*).

“The same declarations having been made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at St. Petersburg to Husni Pasha, the Imperial Government hasten to take act of that same, and will instruct the (? proper) authorities to allow the said ships to pass according as the Imperial Embassy shall notify their arrival in the manner indicated.

“It is also understood that, in conformity with the understanding come to, these ships shall not pass by the Straits together (*en groupes*), but one after the other, at a sufficient interval to allow of one to have passed the Dardanelles by the time the other arrives at the entrance to the Bosphorus.”

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 50.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 535.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 28, 1904.

R. November 1, 1904.

It is officially announced in the Russian press today that the Emperor has ordered the steamers of the Volunteer Fleet “*Smolensk*” and “*Petersburg*” to be added

as cruisers to the Russian fleet, and to receive respectively the names of "Rion" and "Dniepr."

They will be included in the category of cruisers of the second class.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE.

v. memo. as to views of the Cabinet,⁽¹⁾ and my conversation with Russian Ambassador of today.⁽²⁾

L.
3/11.

⁽¹⁾ [The following is the text of this memorandum: Case of the "Smolensk" and "Petersburg," *vide* Sir Charles Hardinge's despatch No. 535 of October 28th.

It was decided by the Cabinet that ships of the Russian Volunteer Fleet might be allowed to leave the Black Sea if they fulfil the conditions described in Mr. Townley's telegram No. 13 Tr[eaty] of the 8th Aug[ust]: and that we should not even be able to object to their being thereafter fitted out as cruisers at Libau. Their case, in such an event, would seem to be indistinguishable from that of a German or English merchant steamer, bought in the Black Sea, brought out unchanged into the Mediterranean and subsequently equipped in some Russian port in the Baltic:—a proceeding which would clearly not be an infringement of the Treaty of London. The case of these two ships however presented much greater difficulty. They are, we understand, to be re-named, and it is apparently intended that they should sail from Libau as cruisers and take an active part in naval operations. Our general feeling was that, as these vessels left the Black Sea fraudulently in the guise of peaceful vessels, in spite of the fact that they had their guns on board, and were immediately afterwards transformed into ships of war, it was impossible to admit that they could purge their offence simply by going to Libau, altering their names, and obtaining a fresh commission. Some of our colleagues thought that the two ships, in order to purge their offence, should return to the Black Sea equipped as merchantmen, after which they would presumably be in the same position as the other Volunteer Ships now said to be on the point of sailing and might be permitted to pass the Dardanelles on the same condition. It was felt however that it was not easy to defend the contention that while a voyage to Libau was *not* sufficient to purge their offence, a voyage to Libau and back to the Black Sea *was* sufficient to purge it. The more sustainable view seemed to be that these vessels, having committed a fraud, were disqualified for employment as ships of war until the end of the war. It was felt that their re-appearance on the scene in the guise of ships of war after refitting at Libau, particularly if they interfered with British shipping, would create a feeling of the utmost indignation in this country.

The feeling of the Cabinet was that a solution of the difficulty might perhaps be found if we could obtain from the Russian Government an assurance that the two ships would be used as tenders, but would not be allowed to take prizes, or at any rate British prizes.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 55, No. 52.]

No. 51.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Pera, November 3, 1904.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

D. 1.35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 20.)

R. 2.5 P.M.

Treaty.

The Sultan has sent special messenger to tell me His Majesty has acceded to request of Russian Ambassador for permission for five ships of the Volunteer Fleet and two of the Russian Steam Navigation Company to pass through the Straits a proviso being made that the terms of exchange of views as reported in Sir N. O'Connor's telegram No. 13 of August 8th⁽¹⁾ shall be scrupulously observed.

Special reference is made in Sultan's reply to conditions that only one ship shall be in the Straits at the same time and that they shall not have guns and munitions of war on board nor change the flag.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 53, No. 49.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 397.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 3, 1904.

I told the Russian Ambassador today that I had heard from a trustworthy source that the Volunteer Steamers "Smolensk" and "Petersburg" had been renamed, and were about to sail from Libau as cruisers. I thought it my duty to mention to His Excellency, although I did not desire to raise the question officially at this moment, that this intimation seemed to me most alarming. We both of us wished, I knew, to do all that lay in our power for the purpose of avoiding complications between our two countries. Here was a case which seemed to me calculated to lead to a very dangerous outbreak of public opinion in this country. These two ships had emerged from the Black Sea under the mercantile flag but being in fact ships of war being built to carry guns and having guns on board, and in such a state that they were able to transform themselves almost immediately into cruisers and to harry our commerce. His Excellency would remember the feeling of indignation occasioned by their proceedings. We had happily succeeded in averting the danger thus created, but what would be said when the same two ships, under newly assumed names, reappeared upon the scene and resumed their operations against the commerce of neutrals? His Excellency said that the fact of their having been recommissioned at Libau seemed to him to alter their legal position. I said that I ventured to differ, but that I did not wish to argue the case upon legal grounds but upon the broader grounds of public expediency. I would for the present only ask His Excellency to consider what I had said, and whether it was not possible that we should arrive at a reasonable understanding upon the matter. It might perhaps, for instance, be arranged that these two ships should be employed as tenders to the Russian Fleet, but should not interfere with neutral commerce. His Excellency promised to consider my suggestion. He observed that we were continually throwing obstacles in the way of the Russian Navy in its attempts to put a stop to the carriage of contraband articles, and he dwelt upon the manner in which the Russian Government had conceded some of our demands. I told His Excellency that, while I admitted the considerate manner in which the communications upon this subject had been conducted, I was afraid we could not claim to have achieved much in the interests of British commerce. I said that I had been engaged during the last few days in drafting a letter upon this subject to the London Chamber of Commerce, that I had done my best to show that something had been accomplished, but that, all told, it did not come to much. The views held by the Russian Government upon the subject of contraband of war still remained far in excess of any which the British Government had ever professed or accepted.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

[ED. NOTE.—Between November 6 and 11 the following steamships of the Russian Volunteer Fleet were reported as having passed the Straits, "Yaroslav," "Voronej," "Vladimir," "Tambo V," "Kiev." Two ships of the Russian Steam Navigation Company also passed the Straits "Jupiter," on November 11; and "Merkuria," on November 14.]

No. 53.

*Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*F.O. Turkey 5448.
(No. 40.) Treaty.*Constantinople, D. November 7, 1904.
R. November 14, 1904.*

With reference to Your Lordship's telegram No. 148 of the 4th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit to Your Lordship herewith, copy of a Memorandum which I caused to be left with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 5th instant, taking note of the communication made to me by the Sublime Porte of the conditions under which His Majesty the Sultan had acceded to the request of the Russian Ambassador that certain ships of the Volunteer fleet and two vessels chartered from the Russian Navigation Company might be allowed to pass through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

I have, &c.

WALTER TOWNLEY.

Enclosure in No. 53.

*Memorandum.**Constantinople. 5 Novembre 1904.*

LE Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique prend acte par le présent des déclarations faites en vertu des ordres de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, au Chargé d'Affaires d'Angleterre le 3 Novembre, 1904, par Son Excellence Noury Bey au nom de la Sublime Porte, concernant les conditions dans lesquelles devra s'effectuer le prochain passage par les détroits du Bosphore et des Dardanelles de cinq bâtiments de la flotte volontaire Russe et de deux navires de la Compagnie de Navigation à vapeur Russe, à savoir, que ces bateaux n'auront à bord ni canons ni munitions de guerre, et battront le pavillon de commerce pendant toute la durée de leur voyage.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 54.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.*F.O. Russia 1731.
(No. 574.) Confidential.
Sir,*Foreign Office, November 15, 1904.*

. . . . ⁽¹⁾ During the course of our conversation, M. Cambon mentioned to me that the French Government had heard from their Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg that arrangements would probably be made for the purpose of preventing the four Volunteer Ships about to leave Libau as cruisers from doing anything likely to produce incidents of a disturbing character. I observed that the only two transformed ships as to which we felt serious anxiety were the "Smolensk" and the "Petersburg." His Excellency said that four ships had been spoken of in the communication which he had received. The Russian Government were under the impression, derived from something which I said to Count Benckendorff, and which Sir Charles Hardinge had said to Count Lamsdorff, that in our opinion it was sufficient for a Volunteer Ship to visit Libau and be recommissioned there in order to enable it to re-appear upon the scene as a ship of war. I said that we had not made this admission in regard to the "Smolensk" and the "Petersburg," whose antecedents placed them in a category of their own. His Excellency told me that

⁽¹⁾ [The first two paragraphs of this despatch deal with the Dogger Bank incident and are printed above, v. p. 36, No. 27.]

whilst Count Lamsdorff had every desire to deal with this question in a considerate fashion, his difficulties were inconceivably great. As an illustration of this, he told me that the "Smolensk" and the "Petersburg" had received orders to convert themselves into ships of war immediately after entering the Mediterranean, from the Grand Duke Alexander, who wished to put a little more life into the proceedings of the Russian Navy, and that not only Count Lamsdorff but the Grand Duke Alexis was entirely unaware that such orders had been issued.

[I am, &c.
LANSDOWNE.]

No. 55.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5448.

(No. 210.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 16, 1904.

The Japanese Minister made to me today a statement to the following effect with regard to the Russian Black Sea Fleet:—

On the 27th July he had expressed to me, in view of a remark which I had made to him in January last⁽²⁾ to the effect that, in case of Russia's violation of the Dardanelles Treaties, Great Britain would not sit by quietly, the earnest desire of the Japanese Government that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] should decide to take in good time such steps as would be calculated effectively to prevent the possibility of the Black Sea Fleet passing the Straits.

I had then said that I did not for a moment believe that, having regard to the action of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in the case of the Volunteer Ships "Peterburg" [*sic*] and "Smolensk" and its results, the Russian Gov[ernment] would be likely to attempt to send the Black Sea Fleet through the Straits, and that as to this, I remained of the opinion which I had expressed in January last.

Viscount Hayashi had now to inform me that the Imperial Government trusted that no such attempt, even if it were made by the Russian Government, would be allowed to be carried out.

But, in view of the successive passages being now made through the Straits by the Volunteer Fleet Steamers, and having regard to the reported preparation of the Black Sea Fleet for a voyage, Viscount Hayashi was once more to draw my attention to the serious aspect of the question, and state that the Japanese Gov[ernment] earnestly desired that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would vigilantly watch the movements of the Fleet and take suitable steps should circumstances require it.

I told him that we had not ceased to watch the movements of the Black Sea Fleet, and that I was happy to be able to tell him that our latest information was to the effect that the report that it was about to leave the Black Sea was unfounded. We had, on the contrary, recently heard that the Fleet had been paid off.

Our policy in regard to this question remained, I said, unchanged.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSDOWNE].

⁽¹⁾ [The substance of this despatch was telegraphed as No. 139 of November 17 to Sir C. MacDonald.]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* Telegram of Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald, No. 26, of January 30, 1904, p. 48, No. 40.]

[ED. NOTE.—The following Memorandum is printed here for convenience, in view of its references to past negotiations, notably in 1903.

Confidential.
(8968.)

Memorandum by Sir *James* Hardinge

Memorandum respecting the Passage of Russian War Vessels through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.

Foreign Office, November 16, 1906.

The following are the formal Treaty stipulations on the subject of the passage of vessels of war through the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus :—

By the Convention of the 30th March, 1856, attached to the Treaty of Paris :

"Article I. Sa Majesté le Sultan, d'une part, déclare qu'il a la ferme résolution de maintenir à l'avenir le principe invariablement établi comme ancienne règle de son Empire, et en vertu duquel il a été de tout temps défendu aux bâtiments de guerre des Puissances étrangères d'entrer dans les Détroits des Dardanelles et du Bosphore; et que *tant que la Porte se trouve en paix* Sa Majesté n'admettra aucun bâtiment de guerre étranger dans les dits Détroits."

The other Signatories undertook to respect this determination of the Sultan, and to conform to the principle laid down.

The London Treaty of the 13th March, 1871, says :—

"Art. II. The principle of the closing of the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, such as it has been established by the Separate Convention of the 30th March, 1856, is maintained, *with power to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to open the said Straits in time of peace to the vessels of war of friendly and allied Powers, in case the Sublime Porte should judge it necessary in order to secure the execution of the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris of the 30th March, 1856.*"

By Article LXIII of the Treaty of Berlin, the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and the Treaty of London of the 13th March, 1871, are maintained in all such of their provisions as are not abrogated or modified by the Berlin Treaty.

At the 18th Sitting of the Berlin Congress, Lord Salisbury made the following declaration on behalf of England :—

"Considering that the Treaty of Berlin will modify an important part of the arrangements sanctioned by the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and that the interpretation of Article II of the Treaty of London, which is dependent on the Treaty of Paris, may thus become a matter of dispute :

"I declare, on behalf of England, that the obligations of His Britannic Majesty relating to the closing of the Straits do not go further than an engagement with the Sultan to respect, in this matter, His Majesty's independent determinations in conformity with the spirit of existing Treaties."

At the 19th Sitting, Count Schouvaloff made the following counter-declaration :—

"The Plenipotentiaries of Russia, without being able exactly to appreciate the meaning of the proposition of the second Plenipotentiary of Great Britain respecting the closing of the Straits, restrict themselves to demanding, on their part, the insertion in the Protocol of the observation that, in their opinion, the principle of the closing of the Straits is an European principle, and that the stipulations concluded in this respect in 1841, 1856, and 1871, confirmed at present by the Treaty of Berlin, are binding on the part of all the Powers, in accordance with the spirit and letter of the existing Treaties, not only as regards the Sultan, but also as regards all the Powers Signatory to these transactions."

The only exceptions authorized by Treaty (1856) are two gun-boats for each Power for the Danube, and light despatch-boats for the service of the foreign Embassies at Constantinople, the size of such vessels being limited by Regulations issued by the Porte the 7th April, 1859, to 50 mètres in length and 800 tons in bulk.

In consequence of frequent applications from foreign Powers for a relaxation of the Treaty rule, the Porte, in 1868, issued a Circular in which it said :

"Aussi a-t-elle décidé que désormais il n'y aura absolument d'autre exception que pour celui des bâtiments de guerre sur lequel se trouverait un Souverain ou le Chef d'un Etat Indépendant."

In practice, however, this rule has been openly relaxed for the visits of Princes and some other distinguished persons, and such exceptions have not given rise to protests.

As regards the passage through both Straits of Russian vessels of war or vessels of the Volunteer fleet, conveying troops or munitions of war, our policy had been to call attention to any cases in which the provisions of Treaties appear to have been disregarded, and to warn the Porte formally that if occasion should arise we should claim similar treatment. This course was taken in June 1888, when the Russian war vessel "Zabiaka" had been allowed to pass again in August 1890, when permission was given for the passage of three Russian torpedo-boats, and on subsequent occasions, especially in August 1892, and September 1893, when questions arose as to granting special privileges to Russia for the conveyance of munitions of war through the Straits.

Although there have been several instances of evasion of the Treaty of Berlin by the Russian Government in time of peace, it was only during the Russo-Japanese war that the question of the passage of the Black Sea fleet into the Mediterranean became acute. The subject was widely discussed in the Russian press, and the Russian Government were urged to disregard the likelihood of any action on the part of His Majesty's Government to prevent the passage of the Dardanelles. At one moment there were indications of preparations with this intention at the naval ports in the Black Sea. Warnings were given to Count Benckendorff and the Russian Government that such a proceeding, being contrary to Treaty, could not be permitted. The necessary steps to frustrate the junction of the Black Sea fleet with the Russian fleet in Far Eastern waters, or with the Baltic fleet on its way to the East, were considered by His Majesty's Government, and a decision taken as to the measures to be adopted. The idea of any action of this kind, if ever seriously contemplated by the Russian Government, was eventually abandoned.

It was during the recent war that the Russian Government found themselves for the first time hampered by the provisions of the Treaty of 1856 relating to the Dardanelles. They had hitherto succeeded in evading, in isolated instances the Treaty stipulations, and although on each evasion a protest had been addressed to the Porte by His Majesty's Government it was not anticipated that any other Government would support Great Britain, or that His Majesty's Government would ever do more than to protest. When the Russian Government realized that their anticipations were mistaken, they found themselves seriously handicapped in not being able to utilize the services of two first-class cruisers and one battle-ship of the Black Sea fleet, these being the only efficient vessels in those waters. The necessity was then fully recognized by the Russian Government and the press of introducing by negotiation some modification of the Treaty clauses relating to the Dardanelles which would be more advantageous to them in the event of future conflicts with foreign Powers other than Turkey.

Previous to the outbreak of the late war the Russian Government had been fairly satisfied with the *status quo* of the Dardanelles which they had been able to successfully evade on certain occasions, and which they greatly preferred to the only other proposals hitherto made—viz., the opening of the Straits to the war-ships of all Powers.

It is probable that the Russian Government will now desire a modification of the *status quo*, and if it is thought desirable to make some Concession to Russia in return for other advantages to be obtained during the pending negotiations, and if this is a concession upon which they set store, it would be possible to promise to the Russian Government our support in obtaining the consent of the Powers to a modification of Article II of the Treaty of London in the sense of the declaration made by Lord Salisbury at the 18th Sitting of the Berlin Congress. (See earlier portion of this Memorandum.)

By a change in this sense the Russian fleet would, *with the consent of the Sultan*, be able to freely navigate the Straits without hindrance; and although we and the other Powers would enjoy the same facility, the Russian Government would be in a better position than other Powers to exert pressure upon the Sultan to give to their fleet the requisite permission, and to withhold it from the ships and fleets of other Powers. It is possible, however, that the Russian Government might demand a specific statement that the right of free navigation of the Straits should be conceded to their ships and denied to all others.

This eventuality has already been discussed by the Committee of Imperial Defence, and I quote here an extract from their Report giving the conclusions at which they arrived, together with an opinion given by the Director of Naval Intelligence on the same subject:—

Extract from Defence Committee Paper 1 B (Report by Mr. Balfour of the Conclusion arrived at on the 11th February in reference to Russia and Constantinople, February 13, 1903).

"The subject of the Dardanelles and Constantinople was discussed on the 11th February in connection with two different but closely allied problems.

"The first of these may be stated as follows:—

"What difference would it make to the balance of power in the Mediterranean if Russia were to obtain, through possession of Constantinople, free egress from the Black Sea through the Dardanelles, these remaining closed, as at present, against other Powers?

"The answer to this question unanimously accepted by the Committee was that, while Russia would no doubt obtain certain naval advantages from the change, it would not fundamentally alter the present strategic position in the Mediterranean."

"Extract from Defence Committee Paper 2B (*The Effect on our Naval Strategic Position in the Mediterranean of a Russian Occupation of Constantinople.*—Director of Naval Intelligence, February 1903).

"It may be stated generally that a Russian occupation of the Dardanelles, or an arrangement for enabling Russia to freely use the waterway between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, such as her dominating influence can extract from Turkey at her pleasure, would not make any marked difference in our strategic dispositions as compared with present conditions."

From these extracts it is evident that it is, if desirable, possible to make an important concession to Russia in relation to the Dardanelles without fundamentally altering the present strategic position in the Mediterranean.](¹)

C. H.

(¹) [*cp.* the conversation between King Edward and Sir Charles Hardinge on April 22, 1904, in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 289–90. Both are reported as of opinion that "there did not appear to be any reason for preventing the passage of the Dardanelles by Russian warships as we have endeavoured to do in the past," and that "this concession of an unopposed passage might prove a very useful asset in the event of the general negotiations for an arrangement with Russia being resumed. It would be a useful *quid pro quo* to have in hand." A memorandum by Sir E. Grey upon the question of the Straits, dated October 14, 1908, is printed in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377, v. also pp. 451–2, No. 387: 452–3, Nos. 388–9: 454–5, No. 391. For further references to the Straits in Vol. V, v. Subject Index, pp. 881–2, sub *Straits—Bosphorus and Dardanelles, Question of Egress and Ingress.*]

IV.—SUMMARY OF BRITISH CLAIMS ON RUSSIA IN CONNEXION WITH THE WAR, 1904-6.

No. 56.

Extract from the Annual Report for Russia for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Despatch No. 4 from Sir A. Nicolson, of January 2, 1907.

British Claims.

F.O. 371/318.

20. Little desire has been shown on the part of the Russian Government to satisfy the claims which have been presented on behalf of British Companies and subjects during the past two years, a fact which may perhaps be attributed to the dilatoriness of Russian methods and to the lack of ready money and the present financial crisis in Russia. Little progress can therefore be said to have been made during 1906 in the outstanding British claims, while a large increase is to be noted in their number owing principally (1) to the war in the Far East; and (2) to the recent internal disorders in Russia.

21. Among these claims by far the largest and more important are those arising from the Russo-Japanese war, which are of two descriptions, namely, shipping claims and claims arising from loss of property in the war area, *e.g.*, Port Arthur and Dalny.

22. The shipping claims can be divided into four categories:—

(a.) Claims in which the Russian Government has in principle agreed to pay compensation (the "Malacca" and the "Ardoval") but has requested further documentary evidence. During the past year the documentary evidence required on behalf of these ships, together with that relating to the "Formosa" (presented for the first time this year and for which the claim is similar to that of the "Malacca") has

outstanding
British claims.

claims arising from
the Russo-Japanese
war.

shipping claims.

been transmitted to the Russian Government but the compensation has not yet been paid.

(b.) Claims which have been finally adjudicated, but in which no compensation has been awarded.

23. Under this heading is included the "Knight Commander," the sinking of which was justified by the Vladivostock Prize Court, this decision being confirmed by the Supreme Prize Court. His Majesty's Government have proposed to the Russian Government to refer the question as to whether the sinking was justifiable to the arbitration of The Hague Tribunal, a proposal to which as yet the Russian Government have given no reply.

24. In the case of the "Cilurnum," the claim for compensation was rejected by the Libau Prize Court on the 2nd September, 1906, and no appeal was lodged, so the claim has lapsed.

25. In the case of the "Allanton," which, together with its cargo, was released by decision of the Supreme Prize Court, though no compensation was allowed for detention, claims for compensation have been presented both on behalf of the owners and of the crew, but have been refused by the Russian Government, and His Majesty's Government have allowed the case to drop.

26. As regards the "Calchas," in which, as in the "Allanton" case, it was maintained by the Russian Supreme Court that where detention was regular, no compensation was due, His Majesty's Government have asked for a reconsideration of this decision, while Mr. Kydd's claim for loss of personal effects stolen on board this vessel while she was in charge of the Russian naval authorities at Vladivostock, has again been pressed.

(c.) Claims pending before the Prize Court.

27. These are four in number: the "Oldhamia," which was sunk while in charge of a prize crew, and which was alleged to have explosives on board. The case came before the Libau Prize Courts on the 20th and 21st November, 1906, when the expert evidence given tended to show that there were no such explosives on board, but the case has been adjourned for further evidence till February 1907; the "Hipsang," "St. Kilda," and "Ikhona," which are also expected to come up shortly for hearing.

28. In these last three cases, in all of which the vessels were sunk, His Majesty's Government maintained that the cases were not ones for the decision of a Prize Court, but ultimately agreed to recommend the parties to submit them to the Prize Courts, reserving at the same time the right to press the claim diplomatically whatever the decision might be.

(d.) Claims which have only been presented through the diplomatic channel, and have not been referred to the Prize Courts, viz.:—"Hsi-ping," "Ching-ping," and "Fuping."

29. The "Hsi-ping" was detained at Dalny by the Russian authorities in February 1904, and a claim for demurrage was preferred on the 11th November of that year, while an additional claim on behalf of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China on account of the late arrival of certain Sycee silver and bills due to the detention of the "Hsi-ping," was presented on the 26th January, 1906.

In the case of the "Ching-ping," a claim was presented for compensation, the vessel being fired at and damaged by the Russian forts and warships in Port Arthur in February 1904.

30. The "Hsi-ping" and "Ching-ping" claims were presented simultaneously, and were refused by the Russian Government in March of this year, it being alleged that the movements of the vessels were suspicious, and that the port regulations were not observed. Further documentary evidence being forthcoming, these claims were again presented on the 30th June, 1906, but no reply has yet been received from the Russian Government.

31. The "Fuping" was also fired on in Port Arthur in February 1904 by a Russian war vessel, and several passengers were wounded on board. The Russian Government refused compensation on the ground of irregularities on the part of the steamer's agent and of the steamer itself. On the 20th May of this year, a further note was addressed to the Russian Government, again pressing the claim, and supplying evidence in refutation of the Russian charges. To this note no answer has been received.

claims arising from
destruction of
property in the
of the war.

32. The second class of claims in connection with the Russo-Japanese war are those arising from the destruction of property in the war area, and are chiefly due to the orders given at Port Arthur and Dalny, on the outbreak of the war for all British subjects to leave those towns within the twenty-four hours, which order prevented any measures being taken for the proper protection of property.

In view of the fact that by the principles of international law a belligerent Government has the right to require neutral individuals to leave the scene of warlike operations, compensation for such claims has only been demanded as an act of grace, it being pointed out that the cases were for the most part ones of great hardship, and that the orders of the local authorities made it impossible to take proper measures for the protection of property. The Russian Government has as yet given no reply as to her treatment of these claims beyond intimating* that they have been submitted to a Special Commission, instituted by the Emperor for the examination of claims arising out of the Japanese war, which supersedes the former Commissions appointed for this purpose in the Ministries of War and Marine, whose powers were not accurately defined. This Commission, which was approved by the Emperor on the 8th of June, 1906, is to be presided over by a member of the Council of Empire, and is to have the final right of decision in the cases of all questions submitted to it, no right of appeal being allowed, "the circumstances of the moment and the possibility of the Treasury being able to pay such claims being taken into consideration." It will include representatives of the various Departments interested, and will have the right to call to its assistance such private individuals and officials whose co-operation may seem useful.

33. Enquiry was made of the Russian Government whether this Commission would also decide the claims of British subjects who suffered losses during the mutiny among the Russian garrison at Vladivostock in November 1905 (Zorn and Ross' claims). The Russian Government have replied to this inquiry, made in regard to the claim of Mr. Zorn, by a note dated the 29th December, in which this case is treated on the same principle as claims in connection with the internal disorders (see Class II), and stating that the only measure to be taken by Mr. Zorn is to have recourse to legal procedure.

34. The claim of Joseph Geddes for compensation on account of alleged false imprisonment at Mukden, and ill-treatment, which has been the subject of repeated representations to the Russian Government during the past year must also be included among these claims. The Russian Government at first denied the accusations made against them by Geddes, and have finally refused to consider his case till a sum of money, which they declare was borrowed by him from the Russian Military Attaché at Tien-tsin, has been repaid.

35. In connection with the case of Grant and Findlay, captured in 1904 on board the Japanese vessel "Hakuse Maru," a formal protest was made on the 2nd June of this year to the Russian Government against their action in detaining as prisoners of war for eighteen months the subjects of a neutral Power serving on board an enemy merchant vessel which was in no way employed in or connected with belligerent operations, and it was stated that a claim for compensation on behalf of these two men would be presented in due course.

36*. N.B.—Since writing the above the Russian Government have returned for translation all the documents presented in support of the claims for compensation for destruction of property in the areas of the war (Lees, Simpson, MacLaren, Collins,

* See paragraph 36.

Lent, Baker, Soper, McCullagh, Short, Eveleigh, and Edwin Fischel and Co.'s claims, the last named of which was presented by the parties direct to the Russian Government). Translations of the documents in support of Mr. Davidson's claim had already been submitted to the Russian Government at their request.

37. To the numerous claims of this class presented by this Embassy and by the Embassies and Legations of other countries, the reply of the Russian Government has invariably been to the effect that in accordance with the general principles of Russian Law the Imperial Government is not responsible for losses caused during disturbances, and that compensation can only be obtained from the persons guilty of disorders to whom these losses were due, and that claimants can bring action against such persons, including officials, in the courts of law. The Russian Government add that this is the only remedy open to Russian subjects, and that foreigners cannot expect more privileged treatment.

Claims in connection with the internal disorders in Russia.

38. The views of the Russian Government as regards compensation have been communicated to all persons who have submitted claims of this description to His Majesty's Embassy, together with instructions as to the proper method of presenting such claims, namely through the Foreign Office, should they still desire to do so.

39. The only Concession granted to landed proprietors who have suffered losses during the disorders is that by a law published the 28th May, 1906, they are permitted to borrow money of the State at comparatively easy terms. Six million roubles have also been set apart in the Russian Budget for the compensation of such losses, but it is doubtful whether British subjects will profit by this measure.

40. Numerous representations have been made during the past year in connection with the duties imposed and the fines levied by the Russian Customs.

Claims in connection with the Russian Customs.

On the 12th January of the present year the attention of the Russian Government was called to the hampering effect of the proposed new Custom Regulations and it was pointed out that the probable result would be the curtailment of the British export trade to Russia. In their reply to these representations the Russian Government denied the unfavourable and hampering character of the new tariff in regard to British trade, and pointed out that Great Britain would enjoy under the most-favoured-nation clause all advantages conceded to other countries.

41. On the 1st March the new Customs Tariff, resulting from the Russian Commercial Conventions with France, Austria-Hungary, and other countries, came into force, and to the increased rates of duty imposed by this Tariff must be attributed to a great extent the numerous claims which have been presented to the Russian Government on behalf of British firms.

42. The attitude of the Russian Government in this respect has not been altogether unfavourable, about one-third of the claims presented having been allowed. On two occasions fines imposed owing to clerical errors on the part of the importers have been remitted, and the Russian Government have also in several instances admitted the demands for a different classification of imported goods.

43. Under this heading are included the claims of British-Indian subjects to the estates of deceased relatives in Russian Central Asia, three of which have been paid during the current year, while the claims of three others (Lokumal, Verhomal, and Mulchand estates) are still under the consideration of the Russian Government.

Miscellaneous claims.

44. The case of the British subject Charles Webb raised considerable interest in England at the beginning of 1906, but has been allowed to drop owing to the inability of Mr. Webb to prove his statements as to his being imprisoned, drugged, and smuggled out of the country by the Russian authorities.

45. The Russian Government has again been urged to recognize the special and privileged position of the Anglican Church in Russia, and it is stated that a special Commission will shortly pronounce a decision in regard to this matter.

46. The decision of the Canadian Government to accept the compromise proposed by the Russian Government in regard to the indemnity to be paid for the

Canadian sealing-vessels seized in 1902 has been notified to the Imperial Government, but the compensation has not yet been paid.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. A. & P.* (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2348), *Correspondence respecting Contraband of War*, pp. 451-84.]

V.—PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE TREATY OF PORTSMOUTH.

No. 57.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 579.

(No. 333.) Confidential.

Tôkiô, D. November 22, 1904.

My Lord,

R. December 28, 1904.

I have the honour to forward copy of an interesting memorandum by Mr. Hohler, 2nd Secretary of this Legation, giving details of an after-dinner conversation with Marquis Ito.

The modesty of Japan's demands, as set forth by Marquis Ito, in case of success in this war, are worthy of note. So far as I have been able to ascertain in conversation with responsible Japanese, these modest views are very general.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

Enclosure in No. 57.

Memorandum by Mr. Hohler.

Confidential.

Marquess Ito came to take dinner with me last night, and was full of conversation, speaking English better and better as the evening wore on.

After most interesting accounts of his adventures on his first journey to England, of various incidents in which he had played a part during the Restoration, of his interviews with Prince Bismarck, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Pobiedonostzeff, etc., etc., he came to speak of the present war, and its possible consequences.

On my observing that, assuming Japan obtained the greatest measure of success in the war, still, as she could reach no vital point of Russia, it seemed difficult to foresee how any finality could be attained, or on what situation it would be possible to base a definite and durable peace, he replied that, in his opinion—whether that opinion would be adopted by the Japanese nation he could not say—the only method by which a lasting peace could be secured, would be by the internationalization of the railway from the point where it enters Chinese territory. Russia, he said, had come to the Far East not in obedience to any internal force or natural necessity, but had come solely by means of the railway, away from which she had made and could make no progress, and purely from territorial greed. Japan had been driven to war by sheer fear of this aggression, when she saw that even Corea was not escaping Russian encroachments, and not with a view to aggrandizement.

Granting the final success of Japan in the war, she neither wanted Manchuria, nor was she strong enough to maintain large garrisons indefinitely on the remote borders of that province. She had already made explicit declarations that she would respect the integrity of China, and the Marquess said he considered that that integrity was of the utmost importance to Japan, provided it was always accompanied by the policy of the "open door",—the door being effectually open to free competition which would ensure to Japan all she needed.

Manchuria would thus be restored to China: for policing it, a force of Chinese, officered, he said, perhaps by Japanese, would be quite sufficient, and the cost of such an arrangement would be very small. The force would be under the management of the international committee of control, who would provide for its expenses either from the profits of the railway, or from Chinese sources.

Such an administration of the railway by an international body was, in his opinion, the only method by which Manchuria could be securely preserved from subsequent Russian encroachment. It would not be necessary that a great number of nations should be represented on this body, but the permanence of the internationalization must be guaranteed by it, as well as by Japan and Russia.

Sir W. Nicholson who was also present, and I both thought he said that it would be quite enough if England and the United States were on the control. He certainly stated that the first object of importance in Japan's foreign policy was the friendship of England: in the second place came that of America.

(Thus, if the Marquess' views are eventually adopted, they will on the one hand confirm the advantages derivable from the policy of the "open door": on the other, they will entail the responsibility of the guarantee for the internationalization of the railway).⁽¹⁾

Sir W. Nicholson at this point remarked that the moderation of such terms seemed remarkable, when one considered the magnitude of the efforts which Japan would have made.

Marquess Ito answered that it was unprofitable for any country to endeavour to go beyond those limits which appear to have been set by nature to its powers: to do so was to open a source of weakness, and of this Russia was, he thought, an example. All that the Japanese aimed at, was to ensure solidly and permanently, so far as might possibly be done, the future safety and peace of their country: that gained, they desired nothing but moderation.

(Mr. Denison, the adviser to the Japanese Foreign Office, has told me that the Japanese Government do not regard the Liaotung territory as coming under the heading of Manchuria, inasmuch as it belongs by lease to Russia. I do not imagine that Marquess Ito would dissent from this theory, nor that the Japanese would approve the possibility of having to attempt the capture of Port Arthur a third time).⁽²⁾

Later on, he said that when he saw Count Lamsdorff in the course of his journey in Europe in the winter of 1901, and was endeavouring to come to some arrangement as to the Manchurian question, Count Lamsdorff agreed that Japan should have a predominant influence in Corea, but he urged that, in return, Russia must at least be given some compensation, say a settlement, in the South of the peninsular [*sic*]. Marquess Ito at once understood that he must be referring to Masampo. The Russian Minister went on to say that his Government would never make any strategic use whatever of such a settlement. In reply to the question, what guarantee would they give for that, he said they would give a guarantee in writing. To this the Marquess answered nothing, but he thought the offer inadequate.

On the following day, he had an interview with Mr. Witte, who professed not to have seen Count Lamsdorff, nor to have heard the upshot of their conversation, but he put forward the identical proposal, basing it, however, in his quality of Minister of Finance, on commercial grounds.

There is no reason to believe that Marquess Ito was not speaking the truth in giving this account, and, if so, it is interesting as showing that even Count Lamsdorff and Mr. Witte were not unwilling to try a little hazard, instead of confining themselves to the limits of sound business.

With regard to China, the Japanese could, Marquess Ito said, by themselves effect but very little. It was true that Japanese could understand Chinese better than

⁽¹⁾ [The brackets appearing in this document are in the original.]

⁽²⁾ [Marginal comment by Lord Lansdowne: "does this mean that Japan is to keep the Liaotung peninsula? "]

all but a very few foreigners could ever hope to, but the character of the two nations was too dissimilar and the resources of Japan were too feeble. If, however, England were to co-operate with Japan, then much might be done. He said that England had been the first to open up China, and her influence there was older and wider than that of any other country. The two were thus well fitted to work together.

Having recently read a book upon Japan which laid great stress upon the submissiveness of the people—a quality which would seem almost inevitable in view of the great strictness of the feudal régime, under which the people possessed no rights whatever, but were entirely at the discretion of their lords, I asked how far this was, in fact, a characteristic of the Japanese.

He answered that they were entirely submissive up to a certain point, but that in olden days, cases such as that of Sogoro (which was celebrated in the volume recently published by Viscount Hayashi) were far from rare, but he said that very often the heroes of such incidents had sacrificed themselves rather for fame (after the fashion of Herostratus) than truly for the benefit of their fellows. (It is possible that he was here thinking of various attempts at political assassination, by which he himself has been more than once imperilled, which occurred in more recent times.)

He continued, that the root of this submissiveness lay in obedience to the Emperor, whose line had reigned unbroken through at least two thousand years. I ventured to suggest that this had been so only in theory, but the Marquess answered that that was sufficient, for all orders had been issued under the ægis of his authority. There was not now, he said, nor ever had been a single Japanese who believed that the Emperor was a god; he was a man—stretching out his arms—just like himself. It was almost impossible for anyone not a Japanese to understand the feeling of a Japanese towards His Majesty: it was most like to that which we entertain towards a father, and the attitude of the Emperor in the present war made every single Japanese regard it as his own special and individual concern.

T. B. HOHLER.

November 13, 1904.

No. 58.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1682.

(No. 651.) Very Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. December 2, 1904.

My Lord,

R. December 12, 1904.

. . . .⁽¹⁾ When I called at the French Embassy a few days ago Monsieur Bompard expressed his satisfaction at the conclusion of the Agreement with Russia to submit the question of the incident in the North Sea to an International Commission of Enquiry to be held at Paris. On my remarking that the French Government had by their friendly attitude certainly contributed to this peaceful solution, His Excellency observed that the action of the French Government was much criticized in official circles here and that their policy in concluding an agreement with England had been generally attacked in Russia. He further enlarged at some length on the subject of the relations of Great Britain to Russia stating that public opinion in Russia had from the very commencement of the war been thoroughly exasperated against England not merely as the allies of Japan and by the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards various incidents that had occurred, but also by the immoderately hostile tone of the British press. He himself had recently spent a month in Germany and could bear witness to the unfriendly feelings of the German population towards Russia, but the German Government had been more skilful and had given the impression abroad and especially in Russia that Germany was animated by friendly sentiments towards Russia

(¹) [The first part of this despatch refers to M. Bompard's sudden return to St. Petersburg.]

and would assist her when possible through her difficulties. The German press might be considered a free press but nevertheless the German Government succeeded in imposing upon it a certain restraint and he could not help feeling that more efforts might have been made in a similar direction in England. He impressed upon me that the attitude of His Majesty's Government during the next year when the conditions of peace would be under discussion would be decisive of the relations between England and Russia for the next twenty five years. Thanks to the Japanese war the German Government were only now recovering the position which they had lost at the congress of Berlin. If His Majesty's Government continued to maintain the same strained relations during the forthcoming year as in the past twelve months there would be no prospect of a rapprochement between the two countries for another generation. He begged me to remember that the many incidents which had occurred had redounded solely to the advantage of the German Emperor who now had a position at the Russian Court which a year ago would have been regarded as impossible.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE.

All this agrees with what M. Cambon has said altho[ugh] M. Bompard goes a good deal further.
L.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most important conversation.

E.R.

⁽²⁾ [The closing paragraphs refer to the possible policies of the European Powers in the prospective Russo-Japanese peace negotiations. *cp. infra*, p. 120, No. 110.]

No. 59.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. France 3668.

(No. 656.) Confidential.

Paris, D. December 23, 1904.

My Lord,

R. December 24, 1904.

I have read with great interest Sir C. Hardinge's despatch No. 651 Very Confidential,⁽¹⁾ a copy of which was transmitted to me in Your Lordship's despatch No. 617 of the 16th instant.

M. Delcassé, as might be expected, has neither referred in conversation with me to M. Bompard's sudden departure for Russia; nor has he ever indulged in the slightest speculation as to the duration or result of the war. If his opinion is that of ninety-nine in a hundred of the average Frenchmen he must be convinced of the eventual success of the ally of France, just as M. Bompard appears to be.

Without entering into this speculation, which I should certainly consider an unwarrantably presumptuous act on my part, I venture to express my surprise at the comments made by M. Bompard on the attitude of His Majesty's Government and on the hostility of the British Press towards Russia in regard to the various incidents which have happened since the outbreak of the war. M. Bompard is an intelligent man; and although the position which he occupied in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs before his appointment to be Ambassador in Russia was not nominally connected with any but the commercial policy of France towards Foreign Powers, it is not to be supposed that he was without opportunity of studying and acquainting himself with the most salient characteristics of France's most important neighbour. He does not seem to me to have much excuse for his ignorance in regard to the position of His

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

Majesty's Government towards the British Press; or of the wide-reaching independence of the latter. And to a man who cannot avoid being aware of the unscrupulousness, the mendacity, the venality and the coarseness of French journalism, his susceptibility as to the infinitely more decent, more moderate and more discreet tone of the British Press, even under great provocation, appears almost Pecksniffian.

There is no doubt as to the extent of the apprehension entertained in France as to the danger to the Franco-Russian Alliance arising from the overt benevolence of Germany towards the enemy of Japan throughout the present hostilities. However desirous the Government of the Republic may be to preserve the semblance of equitable neutrality, the proceedings of Germany cannot but immensely increase the difficulty of a position which without the aggravation of such foreign rivalry must in itself have been sufficiently intricate. M. Delcassé has latterly been constantly reproached in certain opposition quarters for subordinating the interests of the Alliance with Russia to the more doubtful advantages of an understanding with Great Britain. It is especially to be regretted that the sudden change in the situation in Morocco, and the prospect it raises of serious trouble for France, should have been developed at a moment when the adversaries of that understanding are so eager to avail themselves of the opportunity of justifying their arguments as to the hollowness of the compensation accepted by France for the surrender of her claims in Newfoundland and Egypt. If there is any reproach to be made to recent English journalism it is to my mind to be found in the fact that the coming difficulties of France in Morocco seem to receive insufficient sympathy in the London Press.

I have, &c.

EDMUND MONSON.

No. 60.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, January 12, 1905.

F.O. Japan 595.

D. NOON.

Tel. (No. 9.) Very Confidential.

R. 3 P.M.

In certain usually well-informed circles an idea seems to be prevalent that now that Port Arthur has fallen peace is within measurable distance.

At an interview I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday I sounded him on this point; following are his views which may be taken to be those of the Japanese Government.

Until the Baltic fleet is destroyed or returns to Russia and until a decisive victory is won by the Japanese at Mukden Russian Government will not, he thinks, make any overtures whatever for peace.

Should however these events come to pass the Russian Government may then recognise that the chances of "dictating terms of peace at Tokio" are very remote and be willing to consider question of coming to terms.

Serious internal troubles in Russia will doubtless accelerate this willingness but Minister for Foreign Affairs does not anticipate any such trouble at any rate for six months.

He added however that the Japanese Government have no very reliable information as to what is now going on in Russia.

Japanese Authorities fully expect and are making every preparation for hostilities on a large scale near Mukden they do not think that the Baltic fleet will continue its journey but they are prepared for all eventualities.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2578.

(No. 9A.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 14, 1905.

The American Amb[assado]r informed me today that it had come to the knowledge of the U[nited] S[tates'] Gov[ernmen]t that apprehension exists on the part of some of the Powers that in the eventual negotiations for peace between Russia and Japan claim may be made for concessions of Chinese territory to neutral Powers. The President of the U[nited] S[tates] would be loth to share this apprehension because he believes that the introduction of extraneous interests would seriously embarrass and postpone the settlement of the issues involved in the present contest in the Far East, and would thus make more remote the attainment of that peace which is so earnestly to be desired. The United States Gov[ernmen]t, for their part, had repeatedly made their position well known and had been gratified at the cordial welcome accorded to their efforts to strengthen and perpetuate the broad policy of maintaining the integrity of China and the open door in the Orient, whereby equality of commercial opportunity and access might be enjoyed by all nations.

Holding these views the U[nited] S[tates] disclaimed any thought of reserved territorial rights or control in the Chinese Empire and they deemed it fitting to make this purpose frankly known and to remove all apprehension on this score so far as concerns the policy of the United States which maintain so considerable a share of the Pacific commerce of China and which hold such important positions in the Western Pacific almost at the gateway of China.

Mr. Choate stated that he had received instructions to bring this matter to the notice of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t with a request for an expression of their views. He was at the same time to inform me confidentially that his Gov[ernmen]t were assured in advance of a favo[u]rable response from Germany, and they earnestly hoped that they might receive a similar answer from H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t.

I stated to H[is] E[xc]cellency in reply that the U[nited] S[tates'] Gov[ernmen]t might rely upon the full concurrence of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t in the proposal: our assent might indeed be looked upon in the light of a foregone conclusion.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

[ED. NOTE.—All the Great Powers of Europe ultimately concurred with the circular from the United States of which the text is paraphrased above.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2578.

(No. 18.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 18, 1905.

The American Ambassador handed to me today a note, of which a copy is enclosed with this despatch, upon the subject of the Russian complaint of the manner in which China had discharged her obligations as a neutral.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency asked me what

(¹) [The charges, here made against China by Russia, were declared by Lord Lansdowne to be baseless in his despatch to Sir Claude MacDonald No. 16 of January 28, 1905, F.O. Japan 590.]

action His Majesty's Government had taken in reference to the Russian protest, and I said that I had telegraphed the particulars of it to our Minister at Peking, begging him to supply us with certain information in connexion with the Russian complaint. I added that we entirely agreed with the American Government in holding that every effort should be made to inculcate upon China the duty of strictly observing her duties as a neutral. I also said that it might be worth while to make sure that there had not been a violation by Russia of the neutrality of China on the occasion of the recent cavalry operations under the command of General Mistechenko, who, so far as I was able to make out from a study of the map, seemed to have crossed the Liao River during the progress of those operations.

[I am, &c.
LANSDOWNE.]

Enclosure in No. 62.

Mr. J. H. Choate to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2587.
My Lord,

*American Embassy, London,
January 18, 1905.*

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that my Government have transmitted the Russian protest, charging China with violation of neutrality, to the American Minister in Peking, instructing him to urge upon the Chinese Government the strict observance of their obligations, and at the same time Mr. Hay has addressed a note to the Russian Ambassador at Washington bringing to his notice the fact that both the Chinese and Japanese Governments formally deny the charges of breach of neutrality, and he has expressed the earnest hope and confidence of the President that there may not be on the part of either belligerent nor of a neutral Power any breach of the neutrality which the whole civilized world has agreed to respect, a violation of which could only be disastrous to all the Powers concerned.

I have, &c.
JOSEPH H. CHOATE.

No. 63.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2579.
(No. 22.)
My Lord,

*Washington, D. January 27, 1905.
R. February 4, 1905.*

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of two documents⁽¹⁾ sent to me by the Acting Secretary of State yesterday.

The first contains the recent correspondence between the Russian Ambassador in Washington and the United States Government upon the observance of neutrality by China, together with the instructions sent to the United States Minister in Peking and the reply of the Chinese Government.

The second is a copy of the circular telegram addressed by the Secretary of State to the United States Representatives in Great Britain, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal, disclaiming any thought of reserved territorial rights or control in the Chinese Empire. To this is appended a note stating that replies to this circular telegram have, so far, been received from Great Britain, Austria, France, Germany and Italy agreeing with the position assumed by the United States Govern-

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

ment and declaring their constant adhesion to the policy of maintaining the integrity of China and the "open door" in the Orient.

I regret that I am unable to transmit further copies, having only received two of either document from the State Department.

I have, &c.

H. M. DURAND.

No. 64.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2578.

(No. 25.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 30, 1905.

In my desp[atch] No. 9A of the 14th instant⁽¹⁾ I informed Y[our] E[xcellency] of the communication made to me by the American Ambassador, under instructions from his Gov[ernmen]t, in regard to the maintenance of the integrity of China, and the principle of equality for the commerce of all nations in the Far East. I was informed by H[is] E[xcellency], on the 20th instant, that he had received on the previous day a telegram from Mr. Hay, to the effect that France fully concurred in the proposal of the U[nited] S[tates'] Gov[ernmen]t and desired no concessions of territory in China.

Mr. Choate added that, according to the papers, this was regarded as completing the general concurrence of the Great Powers and was another step in securing the integrity of China.

[I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.]

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 69, No. 61.]

No. 65.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne

F.O. Japan 591.

(No. 84.) Secret.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. March 24, 1905.

R. April 26, 1905.

On the 19th instant I received Your Lordship's telegram (No. 23 Secret)⁽¹⁾ informing me that His Majesty's Government had been secretly informed that the Japanese Government had expressed to the American Government a desire for mediation. Your Lordship added that this desire had been expressed quite recently, and asked whether I had any reason for believing the report to be well founded. As all the information in my possession, derived from personal intercourse with Cabinet Ministers and Statesmen, with whom the destinies of Japan now rest, was of a nature to make me believe that an appeal for mediation was the very last thing contemplated by the Japanese Government, Your Lordship's telegram came as a great surprise.

The entire press of Japan has never for one moment, since the commencement of the war, wavered in its determination to continue the war with Russia, until the latter sued for peace.

(¹) [Not reproduced. The telegram was despatched on March 16.]

The day before the receipt of Your Lordship's telegram, the Prime Minister, speaking at a banquet given by the leading bankers and business men of Japan, when thanking them for the moral and financial support they had so unhesitatingly and ungrudgingly given the Government in prosecuting the war, had stated in the most emphatic manner that Japan would continue the war unflinchingly until she emerged therefrom victorious. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has repeatedly informed me that Japan's quarrel was with Russia, and with Russia alone would she enter into peace negotiations, and then only when the Russian Government, as represented by the Emperor, the Court and the War Party, shewed an unmistakable desire to commence Peace Negotiations. It was therefore incomprehensible to me that Japan, at a moment when her arms were being triumphantly carried to the walls of Mukden, when the complete command of Far Eastern waters was in her grasp, should "intimate to the United States a desire for mediation."

In view of the above facts and considerations I telegraphed to Your Lordship that I saw no reasons for believing the report respecting mediation to be well founded. I added that it was possible that the United States Government had expressed a desire to act as mediators, although no information to that effect had reached me.

It will be within Your Lordship's recollection that, on the 25th of January, I reported by telegram (my telegram Secret, No. 22⁽²⁾) that the information in the possession of the Japanese Government was to the effect that the War Party in Russia was still in the ascendant, and likely to remain so, and if the Japanese Government were absolutely certain that the proposals for peace emanated from the War Party, and were seriously put forward, they would be discussed. On the same day, in my telegram No. 23⁽²⁾ I reported that Baron Komura's personal opinion was that the war would continue, that the Russians were being greatly strengthened on the Sha-ho, and that hostilities would recommence in March. On the 10th of February I again reported by telegraph that Baron Komura had informed me that not until the Tzar and his Government shewed most unmistakably that they were desirous of peace, could the question of peace be even considered.

Baron Komura, the Prime Minister, Marquis Ito and other statesmen have always held the same language to me, and never once has the word mediation been mentioned.

This afternoon I had an interview with Baron Komura on ordinary matters, at the conclusion of which His Excellency said that he would like to put before me the views of the Japanese Government respecting the present general state of affairs—this question had been fully discussed at a Cabinet meeting held that afternoon. Briefly the views of the Japanese Government were as follows. They considered that the battle of Mukden had been a very serious blow to Russia, and that the opinion of all important States, including France, was that Russia's position in the war, both by sea and by land, was well-nigh hopeless. From information at the disposal of the Japanese Government, the vast bulk of the Russian people were of the same opinion, and desired peace: there was also an influential party in Russia of the same opinion, but the Tzar and the Court were more determined than ever to continue the war, and orders for further extensive mobilisation had been issued. Under the circumstances the Japanese Government were equally determined to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. I remarked that if the important States, including France, were convinced of the hopelessness of the struggle on the part of Russia, had not the time for mediation come—might not France use her influence in the cause of peace?

Baron Komura replied that in view of the determined attitude of the Tzar, it would be very difficult for France to make a move without running grave risks of meeting with a rebuff. I then tentatively suggested that, considering the great issues at stake, might not Japan suggest mediation? To this Baron Komura at once replied, "that would be little short of madness, for the War Party in Russia would

(2) [Not reproduced.]

at once look upon it as a sign of weakness, and be strengthened in their resolve to continue the war." "No," he added; "we entered into this war with the full knowledge and belief that it would be a long business, and we are quite prepared to fight to the end."

I made some further observations on the general subject of mediation, and elicited that the Japanese Government had most certainly not made suggestions of mediation to the United States or any other Government, neither had suggestions been received from any Government in the matter. The above information I communicated to Your Lordship by telegram.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

Very interesting and important.

E.R.

[ED. NOTE.—The peace overtures are described in Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt*, ch. VIII and following chapters. There had been overtures in the summer of 1904 (p. 156) and in the autumn and winter of 1904 (*G.P.* XIX, II, ch. 137). In February 1905 M. Witte began discussions with Viscount Hayashi (Tyler Dennett, p. 171). On April 5, M. Delcassé opened the subject with the Japanese representative in Paris, and a hint was transmitted to President Roosevelt on April 18 (pp. 176–7) that he might be asked to act as mediator. He was then in Colorado, and a further suggestion was made by the Japanese Government on May 2 (pp. 183–5) which also gives some of Lord Lansdowne's views. For M. Witte's account, v. *Mémoires* (1921), ch. VI. On one occasion the subject seems to have been mentioned in correspondence between King Edward and President Roosevelt, v. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII*, (1927), II, pp. 432–3. There is some important information supplementary to Tyler Dennett in A. L. P. Dennis: *Adventures in American Diplomacy* (1896–1906) New York (1928), ch. XIV.]

No. 66.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1700.

(No. 228.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. April 4, 1905.

My Lord,

R. April 15, 1905.

In Sir C. Scott's despatch to Your Lordship No. 69 Confidential of the 18th of February 1904,⁽¹⁾ Mr. Kurino is reported to have said that Count Lamsdorff had not imparted to him the actual contents of the Russian note telegraphed to Admiral Alexeieff on the 4th of February 1904, but that he had given him in confidence his personal views of the terms on which a satisfactory settlement might be arrived at. These views, Mr. Kurino told Sir C. Scott, did not, in his opinion hold out any hope of being acceptable to his Government.

The contents of the Russian note have, to the best of my belief, not been made public, but thanks to the courtesy of a gentleman who has had access to the document in question, I am able to give to Your Lordship a summary of the reply of the Russian Government, which takes the form of a series of nine articles, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy herewith.

From a comparison of this document with the instructions given to Mr. Kurino, of which Viscount Hayashi left a copy at the Foreign Office on the 14th of January

(¹) [Not reproduced. It described and commented on the Russo-Japanese negotiations of February 4–10, which immediately preceded the outbreak of war.]

1904,⁽²⁾ and, taking the modifications proposed by the Japanese Government successively as numbered therein, Your Lordship will notice that:—

1. The first clause of Article V of the Russian counter-proposal relating to the “use of Corean territory for strategic purposes” is maintained.
2. The creation of a neutral zone is stated in Article IX to be desirable.
3. (a.) The “recognition by Japan of Manchuria and its littoral as being outside her sphere of interest” is inserted in Article VI, while the “engagement on the part of Russia to respect the territorial integrity of China in Manchuria” is ignored.
- (b.) The proposed engagement on the part of Russia to respect the rights and privileges of Japan and other Powers in Manchuria is accepted.
- (c.) The “recognition by Russia of Corea and its littoral” as being outside her sphere of interest is omitted.
4. The proposed additional article containing a “recognition by Japan of Russia’s special interests in Manchuria” is also omitted.

The settlement proposed in these nine articles deals almost exclusively with Corea no mention being made of the sovereignty of China in Manchuria nor of the territorial integrity of that province, and it is not surprising that its text has not hitherto been published, in view of the statements repeatedly made by the Russian Government to the effect that their reply contained a satisfactory solution of all pending questions with Japan.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

Enclosure in No. 66.

Russian Counter-Proposal to Japan, made before the outbreak of War.

1. A mutual engagement to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Korea.
2. An engagement on the part of Russia not to impede the commercial and industrial undertakings of Japan in Korea, nor to oppose measures for the safeguarding of such interests in Korea.
3. Recognition by Russia of Japan’s preponderating interests in Korea, and of her right to offer advice and assistance tending to improve the administration of Korea.
4. Mutual obligation not to use any part of Korean territory for strategic purposes,

(2) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, pp. 233–4. The following extract is printed here for the convenience of readers:—

1st. Suppression of the first clause of Article V of the Russian counter-proposal (presented to the Japanese Government through Baron Rosen on the 11th December last), that is to say, “not to use any part of Corean territory for strategic purposes.”

2nd. Suppression of the whole article concerning the establishment of a neutral zone.

3rd. The Russian proposal concerning Manchuria to be agreed to, with the following modifications:—

(a.) Recognition by Japan of Manchuria and its littoral as being outside her sphere of interest, and an engagement on the part of Russia to respect the territorial integrity of China in Manchuria.

(b.) Russia, within the limits of Manchuria, will not impede Japan or other Powers in the enjoyment of rights and privileges acquired by them under existing Treaties with China.

(c.) Recognition by Russia of Corea and its littoral as being outside her sphere of interest.

4th. Addition of an Article to the following effect:—

Recognition by Japan of Russia’s special interests in Manchuria, and of the right of Russia to take measures necessary for the protection of those interests.]

nor to undertake any military works on the coasts of Korea which might menace the free navigation of the Korean Straits.

5. Recognition by Russia of Japan's right to send troops into Korea in accordance with the preceding articles, for the suppression of insurrections or disorders calculated to create international complications.

6. Engagement by Russia to respect the rights and privileges acquired by Japan, as well as by other powers in Manchuria through treaties with China; Japan to recognise Manchuria and littoral as beyond her sphere of interest.

7. Mutual agreement not to impede the junction of the Korean and Eastern Chinese Railroads when they reach the Yalu.

8. This agreement to supplant all previous agreements between Russia and Japan respecting Korea.

9. The desirability, if possible, of creating a neutral zone in Korea.

No. 67.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1700.

(No. 244.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. April 11, 1905.

R. April 15, 1905.

During the past few weeks succeeding the battle of Mukden the question of peace has been once more put forward and anxiously discussed by all those desirous of its realisation. The Russian Government have hitherto invariably maintained their readiness to discuss any proposals made to them by Japan, but that no initiative in that sense need be expected on their side. In spite of the persistent rumours which have been prevalent in the European press of the action of the President of the United States as intermediary between Russia and Japan, the Russian Government assert that no step has been taken by them in that direction and that no approach has been made to them by Mr. Roosevelt. This I believe to be intrinsically true, but I hear on good authority that there is no doubt that the views of the Russian Government as to the basis of any discussion viz. that there should be no war indemnity and no surrender of Russian territory were informally communicated to Mr. Roosevelt from French sources, probably through the French Ambassador in Washington with whom the President is said to be on friendly terms. That, after such a communication, there should be no further question of the consideration of peace on such terms by Japan can hardly be surprising in view of the relative position of the Russian and Japanese armies and the series of important victories obtained by the latter during 14 months of war.

The discussion which has been provoked in the Press and in all shades of society, though barren of immediate results, can only tend to make peace draw nearer. The press is almost unanimous in favour of peace, the "Novoe Vremja" and "Moskovskiya Vedomosti" being practically the only advocates of a continuation of the war. The organs even of Prince Oukhtomsky and Prince Meshtshersky are in favour of a cessation of hostilities. In society in St. Petersburg the advocates of peace have obtained numerous adherents, and its possibility is now openly discussed even in military circles where a few months ago any mention of peace would have been regarded as an act of treason. In spite of the arguments to show the futility of prolonging the war being irrefutable, it is known that the Emperor, though now less decided than hitherto in his opposition, is still the chief obstacle to a policy of peace. Although his Ministers have more than once urged upon His Majesty the necessity of peace owing to the internal situation of the country, the Emperor refuses to listen to their counsels and accuses them of a want of patriotism. In the same manner as when the question of peace

was raised before the battle of Mukden, the Military party urged upon the Emperor that it would be impossible to make peace when four hundred thousand invincible troops had been placed in line facing the Japanese, so also the same advisers now urge upon His Majesty that it would be absurd to make peace at a moment when Admiral Rojestvensky is drawing near to the scene of military operations with a large squadron which he has trained and brought to such a state of perfection as to be able to defeat, or at least seriously damage, the Japanese fleet which is persistently described as having leaking boilers, injured turrets, worn out guns and diminished speed, while a decisive victory would entirely change the aspect of the campaign on land. The question of whether such victory as may be achieved would give to the remains of the Russian Fleet more than a temporary command of the sea is studiously ignored. It seems as though the Emperor and his advisers refuse to recognise the situation as it really is, and regardless of the consequences are now about to stake their last card on the chance of Admiral Rojestvensky obtaining a naval success. It is argued that even if Admiral Rojestvensky is decisively beaten the army will be in no worse position than before, and it is hoped that a few ships may be able to escape either to Vladivostok or to a neutral port where they would be disarmed but would still form the nucleus of a fleet after the conclusion of peace.

In the meantime military preparations are being pushed forward with increased energy, contracts which were at one moment cancelled have now been renewed, and there is every indication of a determination to carry on the campaign vigorously on land. General Linievitch's Army is said to be entirely reorganised and the morale of the troops completely restored. Two additional Army Corps have in the meanwhile reached Head-Quarters, and a hundred and twenty thousand reservists from the last mobilisation in November are being gradually despatched to the front to refill the depleted ranks. They will be followed later by the recruits who were called to the colours last autumn, of whom there are one hundred and thirty thousand belonging to regiments operating in Manchuria. These troops in their entirety cannot possibly reach Manchuria before the end of this year and if, as seems certain, the Japanese armies continue to act on the offensive and the scale of recent Russian losses is maintained, they will be entirely inadequate to raise the effective of the Russian Army beyond that which can be easily outnumbered by the Japanese.

It is said that the return of a defeated and disaffected army would constitute a serious danger to the State, but the alternative of this or a continuation of the war is a choice of evils of which the autocracy and Government will either now or in a few months time have to face the consequences.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 68.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 590.

(No. 72.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 19, 1905.

The Japanese Minister told me today that on the 3rd instant M. Delcassé had spoken to the Japanese Minister at Paris with regard to the possibility of peace. M. Delcassé was convinced that the Russian Government desired peace, and would make it if terms not too humiliating were put within her reach. Mr. Motono had asked M. Delcassé what terms he had in his mind. M. Delcassé had replied that there must be no cession of Russian territory and no indemnity. Any terms from which these points were omitted might be discussed, but M. Delcassé thought it

advisable that the two Powers should negotiate directly. On the 13th instant M. Delcassé had referred again to the same subject. Mr. Motono had answered, under instructions, that the Japanese Government thought it unfair that they should be bound as to certain points while Russia would enter the negotiations entirely unpledged. In the view of the Japanese Government there must be no such restriction of the limits within which a discussion of the terms of peace might take place.

Viscount Hayashi added that the matter rested there, but that he thought the Japanese Government would not object if some friendly Power were to endeavour to bring the two belligerents together.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

No. 69.

Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1700.

(No. 299.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. May 7, 1905.

R. May 13, 1905.

Monsieur de Witte spoke to me today on the subject of the general situation in Russia. He expressed himself in a pessimistic tone. He saw no hope of a victorious issue of the war and little prospect of peace. A continuance of the war meant the general paralysis of Russia as a civilized European power. It meant also a free hand to Germany in Western Europe. Without losing a man or spending a sou Germany had gained more in the last year than by all the sacrifices and victims of 1870.

Russia had been forced to surrender to Germany's commercial demands, by which Germany had been enabled to carry to a triumphant issue her system of commercial treaties by which she had imposed her will on Central Europe, and in the sphere of politics it was impossible for Russia to resent German action, however much opposed to her own interests or those of her ally. From a military point of view, Russia had almost ceased to exist in Europe.

For the last thirty years the power of Germany had been curtailed by her geographical position, between two Powers, one a certain and the other a possible enemy. For a century Russia had enjoyed the immense advantage of having no enemy in her rear. And now, owing to a wholly unnecessary policy of adventure Russia had put herself into that same position which had proved so embarrassing to Germany. The archives of the British Foreign Office, would prove, he said, how from the very beginning he had opposed this policy and how he had done all he could to prevent the occupation of Port Arthur and the construction of the Southern branch of the Manchurian Railway. He had done so because he knew that that occupation would ensure the estrangement of England and the hostility of Japan.

It might be accident, or it might be design; but he could not help believing that the whole policy of Germany for the last ten years had been directed towards the object of creating between Russia and Japan the same relations of permanent hostility as existed between France and Germany. And, if so, her policy, in which every detail seemed carefully adjusted to the end in view, had indeed been crowned with success. He could not help comparing the attitude of Germany towards Russia with that which she had adopted towards other countries with similar results. There was the same encouragement to both parties—first to one and then to the other—which had induced each to embark in a contest in which they counted, and counted in vain, on German support. There was the same "benevolent" and not unprofitable neutrality, and in the end there was the same enfeeblement of the belligerents and the corresponding advantage to Germany.

In conclusion he pointed out with great earnestness that whether or no the "yellow peril" existed in Asia, there was no doubt that from an European point of view, the existence and power of Russia was a matter of the first importance to Western nations and that it was in their interest that a struggle should be put an end to, which, if long continued, would ensure for an indefinite period the supremacy of the German Empire in Europe.

In saying this he begged me to remember that he himself had neither power nor influence.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

M. Witte's remarks are very much to the point.

E.R.

No. 70.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 595.

Tôkiô, May 29, 1905.

Tel. (No. 126.) Very Confidential.

D. 11.50 A.M.

Baltic Fleet.

Naval action between the opposing fleets commenced 2 P.M. May 27 in the Tsushima Straits and continued all yesterday. Torpedo attacks were made nights of May 28 and 27th. Sissoi Veliki captured but sank before reaching port. Another battleship of the "Kniaz Suvarov" class sunk, four Russian cruisers sunk or captured, and five torpedo-boat destroyers out of nine sunk.

Main body of Japanese Fleet gone north in pursuit.

Japanese losses one torpedo-boat destroyer sunk and one second-class cruiser badly damaged.

Above from the minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] who begs it may not be published until the Navy Department issue full report.

No. 71.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Lenox, June 2, 1905.

Tel. (Unnumbered.)

R. 9 P.M.

Japanese Minister asked President yesterday whether he knew views of His Majesty's Government regarding terms Japanese should now impose. President asks whether you are disposed to give him their views confidentially, though he understands difficulty of expressing opinion without knowing what terms Japan

contemplates. Japanese Minister did not mention matter in conversation with me. Please answer to Washington in cypher P.

[*ED. NOTE.*—Lord Lansdowne in reply (Tel. No. 64 of June 3, D. 4:30 P.M., F.O. America 2581) declared he knew nothing of the Japanese terms and would prefer to await "the impression produced by recent maritime catastrophe [Tsushima] on temper and expectations of both belligerents."]

No. 72.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 180.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 2, 1905.

The Russian Ambassador asked me this afternoon whether I could authorise him to add anything to the report which H[is] E[xcellency] was about to send to St. Petersburg in regard to the statement which I made last night at a public dinner upon the subject of the possibility of an eventual modification of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

I said that it did not occur to me that I could usefully add anything to my remarks, except perhaps that I could not insist too strongly upon the fact that our policy in the Far East was essentially non-aggressive and peaceful.

H[is] E[xcellency] enquired whether he might inform the Russian Gov[ernmen]t that, supposing the Agreement were modified, such modification could not in any case involve a change in the character of the neutrality of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t during the progress of the present war.

I replied that I had no objection to his making such a statement to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 73.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Tel. (No. 51.) Secret.

Washington, D. June 5, 1905.

R. 11 P.M.

Mr. O'Beirne called on President yesterday and communicated substance of your telegram No. 64,⁽¹⁾ which the President said was just what he had expected.

The President then said that he gathered from the Japanese Minister that Japan was now disposed to make peace if she got really favourable terms. He had ascertained from Japanese Minister that Japan, in considering question of indemnity, had been inclined to take as a basis the sum paid by France after the war in 1870.

Japanese Government were also taking into account a statement said to have been made by Lord Rothschild, that he could find a loan of 500,000,000 dollars to Russia for the indemnity if one-half remained in London, one-quarter was paid to Japan in cash, and one-quarter in Russian bonds. Japanese Minister's recent inquiry as to the views of His Majesty's Government was probably in connection with this proposal.

(¹) [*v. Ed. note above.*]

Japanese Minister had further made the following inquiry: Did the President think that, if Japan used the German Emperor to bring pressure on the Czar, England would regard it as an offence?(²)

The President had answered that, as far as the United States were concerned, all that they desired was peace. The President thought that the significance of this inquiry was merely that Japanese Minister knew German Emperor to have more influence with the Czar than he had. Japanese Minister had also said that Japan had some reason to think that Germany would seek territorial compensation in the Far East, but that he had (? group omitted: ? told) German Emperor, of course, she could not have.(³)

The President went on to say that in a conversation with Russian Ambassador on 3rd June he had pointed out bluntly the hopelessness of Russia's position, and begged Ambassador to say to the Czar that the President strongly urged the necessity for making peace.

He told the Russian Ambassador that he was ready to take the initiative in proposing to both belligerents to let their Representatives meet at some point between Harbin and Mukden. The President thought [it] best that nothing be said about terms until the Representatives met. Not being sure that Russian Ambassador would lay this proposition before the Czar, President was considering whether he would instruct United States' Ambassador at St. Petersburg to do so. He was going to invite German Emperor, through the German Ambassador, to use his influence in the same direction,(⁴) and he had requested French Ambassador to ask M. Delcassé to do the same.

MARGINAL MINUTES BY KING EDWARD.

(²) *I should say not.—E.R.*

(³) *Of course not.—E.R.*

(⁴) *Quite agree.—E.R.*

No. 74.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Tel. (No. 53.) Secret.

Washington, D. June 5, 1905.

R. June 6, 1905, 7.30 A.M.

My tel[egram] No. 51.(¹)

President today again sent for Mr. O'Beirne to say that he had received a message from the German Emperor.(²) Emperor stated he had informed Czar that he considered it urgently necessary for him to make peace, and that person best suited to make an appeal to the Japanese to grant reasonable terms was the U[nited] S[tates] President. H[is] M[ajesty] had urged Czar to approach the President with that object either through the ordinary channels or by authorizing the German Emperor to put himself into communication on the subject with the President.

The President said he thought it time to act at once as he did not wish to be asked by Russia to approach Japan in the sense suggested and least of all through the instrumentality of the German Emperor.

He had accordingly telegraphed instructions to the U[nited] S[tates] Ambassador at Petersburg to ask for an audience with the Czar, to urge hopelessness of continuing

(¹) [v. immediately preceding document.]

(²) [v. G.P. XIX. II. pp. 607-10. The Kaiser's message was wired on the 3rd and answered by the President on the 5th, v. also letter of Kaiser to Czar of June 3, pp. 419-21 and in Kaiser's Letters to the Tsar (1920), pp. 183-90.]

the struggle and to press upon H[is] M[ajesty] the desirability of his consenting to request of President that Russian and Japanese plenipotentiaries should meet to confer as to whether it is not possible for them to agree as to terms of peace. The Ambassador was to say that the President believed that a direct interview without intermediaries was the best course. After the meeting had been held it would be time enough to discuss suggestions as to terms from any outside Power. If Russia would consent to such a meeting the President would try to procure Japan's consent acting on his own initiative and not stating that Russia had agreed. If, as he believed, he succeeded he would then openly ask each Power to agree to meeting. As to the place of meeting, President suggested somewhere between Harbin and Mukden.

The President told Mr. O'Beirne that he had informed German Emperor of the instructions sent to U[nited] S[tates] Ambassador and he had also requested M. Delcassé, without informing him of the message from the German Emperor, to send instructions to the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg to urge Czar to agree to proposal which he was now making. The President hoped that combined representations of Germany, France and the U[nited] S[tates] might overcome reluctance of the Czar.

[ED. NOTE.—Sir M. Durand's despatch No. 98, Secret, June 8, received June 19, 1905, F.O. America 2579, enclosed a statement reporting the interviews described in these telegrams. It also enclosed the following.

The White House, Washington, June 5, 1905.

Memorandum for despatch to be sent by the State Department.

Secret.

Ambassador Meyer will at once call on His Majesty the Czar and say that he does so by personal direction of the President to urge upon His Majesty the desirability of his consenting to the request of the President to have Representatives of Russia meet with Representatives of Japan to confer as to whether peace cannot now be made. The President speaks with the most earnest and sincere desire to advise what is best for Russia. It is the judgment of all outsiders, including all of Russia's most ardent friends, that the present contest is absolutely hopeless and that to continue it can only result in the loss of all Russia's possessions in East Asia. To avert trouble, and, as he fears, what is otherwise inevitable disaster, the President most earnestly advises that an effort be made by a direct interview without intermediary between Russian and Japanese plenipotentiaries, to see if it is not possible for them to agree as to terms of peace. The President believes it would be better for the representatives of the two Powers to discuss the whole peace question themselves rather than for any outside Power to do more than endeavour to arrange the meeting—that is, to ask both Powers whether they will not consent to meet. After the meeting has been held it will be time enough, if need be, to discuss suggestions as to the terms from any outside friend of either party. If Russia will consent to such a meeting the President will try to get Japan's consent, acting simply on his own initiative and not saying that Russia has consented, and the President believes he will succeed. Russia's answer to this request will be kept strictly secret, as will all that has so far transpired, nothing being made public until Japan also agrees. The President will then openly ask each Power to agree to the meeting, which can thereupon be held. As to the place of the meeting, the President would suggest some place between Harbin and Mukden; but this is a mere suggestion. The President earnestly hopes for a speedy and favourable answer to avert bloodshed and calamity.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt* (1925), pp. 221-2, and reproduced here for convenience.]

No. 75.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2578.

(No. 148.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 5, 1905.

Mr. Whitelaw Reid called upon me yesterday, and brought me a copy of the Letters of Credence which he presented to His Majesty this morning. His Excellency was good enough to deliver to me a message of an extremely friendly character from the President, who had instructed him to express the satisfaction with which he had observed the close correspondence which existed between the policy of His Majesty's Government and that of the United States on the most important international questions. The President had no reason to doubt that the diplomacy of the United States and that of Great Britain would be found moving upon parallel lines in the future. His Excellency added that the President's relations with yourself had been of the most confidential and satisfactory character.

We had some conversation with regard to the situation in the Far East, and I mentioned to His Excellency the substance of your telegram of the 2nd of June,⁽¹⁾ as to which I observed that in my opinion it was impossible, until we had had further opportunities of judging the effect of the recent catastrophe to the Russian Fleet, to form any opinion of the manner in which the attitude of the belligerents would be affected by it. I said however that I would impart to you, for the information of the United States Government, any information which might seem to me likely to be of use to them in forming a judgment.

[I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.]

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 78-9, No. 71.]

No. 76.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1701.

(No. 365.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. June 5, 1905.

R. June 10, 1905.

The extent of the naval disaster in the Korean Straits⁽¹⁾ has at last become generally known and it is now possible to appreciate to a certain extent the impression which it has made upon public opinion in Russia and upon social and official circles in St. Petersburg, although it is as yet premature to forecast what its political consequences will be.

To explain the humiliation and despair now felt on all sides it must be remembered that on the departure of the First Squadron from Cronstadt in August last under the command of Admiral Rojestvensky few of the general public ever believed that the Baltic Fleet would reach Far Eastern waters and, except amongst naval circles, there was a general indifference to its fate.

The excitement caused by the incident on the Dogger Bank in October last, the gradual progress of the fleet round the coasts of Africa, and the meeting of its component parts at Madagascar, attracted public attention, and the praise bestowed upon the movements and tactics of the Fleet by French naval critics in African

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 78, No. 70.]

waters raised Russian hopes until the opinion dawned upon the people that the Squadrons which had met at Madagascar formed not merely an assembly of naval units of varying values but a powerful fighting machine in the hands of an Admiral in whose bravery, skill and determination the whole of the country had every confidence. The safe arrival of the fleet without loss in Indo-Chinese waters was hailed as an extraordinary feat, and public confidence in the Admiral and his ships was still further enhanced by the junction of Admiral Nebogatoff's Squadron, thus forming on paper a most imposing array of battleships far surpassing in number and guns those which the Japanese could bring to meet them. The fact that the fleet was composed of vessels of every type, date, and speed was ignored as was also the fact that, in spite of constant practice and repeated manœuvres, crews which were at the outset undrilled and inexperienced in their duties, could not, even through the energy and ceaseless activity of their Admiral, become thoroughly efficient and well trained when their officers were themselves wanting in experience and training. The hopes of the Russian public had thus by a series of events been raised from a state of callous indifference to one of overweening confidence in the probable success of the Baltic Fleet which was not justified by either the quality of the ships or of the men, the superiority over the Japanese naval forces being in fact merely on paper.

The disillusion which followed the news of the catastrophe, when it became each hour more impossible to conceal the extent of the disaster, was all the greater owing to the hopeful expectations which had been created. The press was at first incredulous, but as the earlier rumours of disaster were steadily corroborated from various sources with even more harrowing details than those that preceded them, leaving no room for further doubt, a shadow of gloom and consternation spread over the land. The cup of bitterness and humiliation was filled to overflowing by the news of the surrender of four Russian battleships together with the Admiral in command of the Fourth Squadron. Various rumours are current in explanation of what is regarded as a discreditable incident, and it is stated that this squadron had already mutinied in the Red Sea when four of the mutineers were hung as exemplary punishment, and that a further mutiny had occurred during the battle, the flags of three of Admiral Nebogatoff's battleships being struck in defiance of the Admiral's orders. On the other hand the surrender is explained on the not improbable hypothesis of inferior guns, bad and insufficient ammunition, antiquated machinery and worn-out boilers and engines. It will only be later that the real truth will be known.

Society in St. Petersburg is full of lamentation for lost relations and friends and of sickening doubt as to the fate of many of whom no certain information has been received. It may with truth be said that this is the first occasion during the present campaign that the horrors of war have been brought home to people in St. Petersburg, since none of the regiments of the Guards have left the capital and only a very limited number of officers of the garrison has volunteered for active service in the Far East, and as these mostly held Staff appointments the losses have been comparatively small. In the present instance a large percentage of the officers on board the ships of the Baltic Fleet belong to the "Equipage" of the Guard which comprises members of the best families in Russia, while the officers of the battle-ship "Alexander III" were the *élite* of the Russian nobility.

The question which is now uppermost in the minds of all is how far the question of the continuation of the war will be affected by the crushing defeat and complete destruction of the whole of the Russian Navy.

The organs of the liberal press advocate peace and the immediate convocation of a Zemsky Sobor. The "Novoe Vremya" and some of the reactionary press urge the prolongation of the war and the summons of a Zemsky Sobor to decide the question of how to continue the war and how to find the necessary means of doing so. The oft repeated statement is made that it would be impossible to make peace without having achieved at least one victory, the spectre of the yellow peril is conjured up for the benefit of foreign countries, allusions are made to the hundred years' war and the thirty years' war, and Napoleon's capture of Moscow is quoted as an occasion

when Russia defeated did not sue for peace. The idea of this section of the press is that The Emperor and Government by making concessions to the people with a view to ensuring their future welfare would be thus able to quiet the agitation now simmering throughout the country, to extend the area of mobilisation now restricted by disturbance, and to induce the people to make still further sacrifices for the continuance of the war. On the other hand it is very widely stated, and to judge by the general feeling in the country, with more probability of truth, that as soon as a Zemsky Sobor had been convoked the first demands made by such an Assembly would be for peace and reforms.

It is significant that on the news of the catastrophe becoming known Russian Consols rose half a point on the St. Petersburg Bourse, the explanation of this being the conviction of the financiers of the imminence of peace.

As regards the all important question of the attitude of The Emperor towards the opening of peace negotiations or the continuation of war there is a general consensus of opinion that His Majesty is still opposed to peace, in spite of the fact that the Government and Chief officials, with the exception of some of the military party, are opposed to the further continuation of hostilities. It is currently reported, and I have every reason to believe it to be true, that the question of peace or war was discussed at a Council of War a few days ago in the presence of The Emperor at Tsarskoe Selo. The Emperor appeared to be hesitating in his opinion, but the Grand Duke Vladimir rose and made an impressive speech advocating peace. His Imperial Highness was however outvoted by the military and naval carpet knights and finally no decision was taken by The Emperor. The Grand Duke, with his characteristic frankness of speech is stated to have said in the presence of The Emperor that the war was now so hopeless that the best course to pursue would be to send a blank paper with His Majesty's signature at its foot to Tôkiô and to ask the Japanese to fill in their conditions of peace.

The general opinion of The Emperor's frame of mind at the present moment is that, just as after the battle of Mukden, when the question of peace was under discussion he resolutely put it on one side until a trial of strength had been made between the Russian and Japanese fleets, so now refusing to admit final defeat and turning a deaf ear to any suggestion of conditions of peace of a humiliating character. His Majesty remembers only the fact that he has still an army of three hundred thousand men in Manchuria and still nourishes the hope that the fortune of war may yet turn and that the Russian arms may at the eleventh hour secure a success which would satisfy the national self esteem and avoid the necessity of accepting onerous and humiliating conditions of peace. Persistence in this attitude will probably end in a further defeat and retreat on land within the next few weeks, and the position of The Emperor and the dynasty who are deeply compromised in this war will after each reverse become more critical. I am of opinion with many others that the safest course for The Emperor in order to extricate himself from the *impasse* in which he now finds himself would be to submit the question of peace or war to his people either by the immediate convocation of a Zemsky Sobor, or, what would be more simple still, by taking the opinion of the provincial zemstvos and so to cover the responsibility of the Crown for whatever course may be decided upon.

It is to be hoped in the interest of Russia and of Europe that the logic of facts will make itself felt and that the folly of prolonging a war which has been a long series of continuous defeats terminating in the absolute annihilation of what eighteen months ago was a powerful Navy, will within the next few days be realised and that an end will be put to a disastrous war which has only been productive of defeat and loss of prestige abroad and of commercial ruin, financial depression and revolutionary agitation at home.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 77.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.*F.O. Japan 594.
Tel. (No. 66.) Secret.Foreign Office, June 6, 1905.
D. 5.30 P.M.

President of the United States has been informed by German Emperor that he has advised Czar that it is urgently necessary for him to make peace and that he should approach President as person best suited to appeal to the Japanese to grant reasonable terms.

President has instructed American Ambassador to ask for audience of the Czar and propose that Russian and Japanese Plenipotentiaries should meet somewhere between Harbin and Mukden to consider possibility of agreement as to the terms of peace.

If Russia would consent President, acting on his own initiative and not stating that Russia had agreed, would try to obtain consent of Japan. Should his overtures be well received he would then openly ask each Power to agree to meeting.

President has informed German Emperor of instructions sent to American Ambassador and has requested French Minister for Foreign Affairs, without informing him of message from German Emperor, to instruct French Ambassador at St. Petersburg to urge Czar to agree to proposal.

No. 78.

*Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*F.O. America 2581.
Tel. (No. 57.)Washington, D. June 8, 1905:
R. June 9, 1905, 7.30 A.M.

The President asked me to call this afternoon. He told me that, in answer to message he sent by Russian Ambassador here to the Czar he was informed that Russian Gov[ernmen]t desired neither peace nor an offer of mediation.

Next day after a visit paid to the Czar by U[nited] S[tates] Ambassador at Petersburg he received a message from the Czar consenting to meeting of Russian and Japanese representatives. The President now intends to make formal proposal to the two Gov[ernmen]ts.

Above is secret.

No. 79.

*Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*F.O. America 2581.
Tel. (No. 58.) Secret.Washington, D. June 8, 1905.
R. June 9, 1905, 7.30 A.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

Japanese Min[iste]r in conversation with me before I saw President gave me to understand that Japan did not mean to disclose her terms unless Russians consented to treat for peace, and that it would be useless for Russians to do so unless they were prepared to make large sacrifices in money and possibly in territory. He said he did not know the Japanese terms but that they would insist on indemnity. He did not say anything about cession of Vladivostok.

(¹) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 80.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Washington, June 13, 1905.

Tel. (No. 61.)

R. 8 A.M.

Russian Ambassador called on President this morning and informed him of Russia's assent to his proposal. He said that Russian Plenipotentiaries would meet Plenipotentiaries from Japan "to discuss question of peace."⁽¹⁾

There is no written communication from Russia, but White House is confident that Russian Government is in earnest. Place of meeting not settled.

⁽¹⁾ [An examination of the attitude of Lord Lansdowne towards peace in June and the President's views thereon is contained in Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt*, pp. 210-4.]

No. 81.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Washington, June 13, 1905.

Tel. (No. 62.) Secret.

R. 8 A.M.

The President would I think like me to urge upon the Japanese Min[ister] the desirability of moderation in peace terms. There seems to be feeling here that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] might properly use its influence with Japan in that direction. I have avoided everything of the kind, supposing that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would probably be reluctant to take any step which could embarrass Japanese, and that in any case it is not my business. Would Y[our] L[ordship] kindly inform me whether this is the attitude I should maintain?

No. 82.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2581.

Foreign Office, June 13, 1905.

Tel. (No. 74.)

D. 3.20 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 62 (of June 13.⁽¹⁾ Russo-Japanese Peace Negotiations).

Attitude which you have adopted is quite in accordance with our view and should be maintained in the absence of instructions to the contrary.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 83.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 592.

(No. 161.)

Tôkiô, D. June 14, 1905.

My Lord,

R. July 31, 1905.

...⁽¹⁾ I was therefore sceptical as to the manner in which the Japanese Government would receive the President's overtures, thinking it possible that, unless Mr. Roosevelt mentioned to the Japanese Government that the initiative had come

⁽¹⁾ [Details as to the course of the negotiations are omitted as they are related in previous documents.]

from the Tzar, which, according to Your Lordship's telegram, the President did not intend to say, they would probably act up to what they had on several occasions said to me, and decline to negotiate.

On the 8th instant, I saw Baron Komura, and an announcement in that morning's paper to the effect that the President was moving in the matter, gave me an opportunity of mentioning the subject. Baron Komura said that the report was incorrect, and that the President had not approached the Japanese Government officially in the matter, and repeated that Japan could not consider any advances, which did not emanate from the Tzar [*sic*] and the War Party; he added that it was immaterial in what manner these advances came to the Japanese Government, whether direct or through a third party. I could see from His Excellency's manner that in all probability the Japanese Government had already been sounded by the President. . . .⁽²⁾

On the 10th instant, Baron Komura wrote to me, and said that the Japanese Government had been officially approached by the President of the United States on the previous day, suggesting a meeting of Japanese and Russian plenipotentiaries without an intermediary in order to see if it would not be possible for these representatives to agree to terms of peace. A reply had been sent accepting the President's proposals, and agreeing to appoint plenipotentiaries of Japan to meet plenipotentiaries of Russia for the purpose of negotiating and concluding terms of peace directly and exclusively between the belligerent powers.

I saw Baron Komura the same afternoon (10th instant) and he said that my surmise was correct, and that the Japanese Government had been sounded early in the week through the Japanese Representative in Washington, but that the official note from the President had only been received on the previous day. Baron Komura handed me the full text of the President's message and the Japanese reply, which he said had been telegraphed to Viscount Hayashi, and would be made public in Tokyo almost at once. It appeared in the evening papers of the 10th. I enclose a copy of these documents.⁽³⁾ Your Lordship will observe that the President's note suggests that plenipotentiaries should be appointed to "agree to terms of peace," whereas the Japanese reply agrees to appoint plenipotentiaries for the purpose of "negotiating and concluding terms of peace." In the course of my interview, Baron Komura made it very clear that the Japanese Government understood that the desire for peace and the first step in the matter had been taken by the Tzar, who had doubtless approached the President of the United States, and it was for this reason that the Japanese Government had accepted with such promptness. He also thought that, under the circumstances, the Russian reply would be equally prompt.

On receipt of Baron Komura's letter I immediately telegraphed to Your Lordship stating that the Japanese Government had accepted the President's suggestions.

On the 11th of June, the following day, I received Your Lordship's telegram, dated the 10th, stating that the Japanese Minister had informed Your Lordship that the Russian and Japanese Governments had now (the 10th instant) *both* accepted the suggestion of the President of the United States.

This morning (June 14th) I have received Your Lordship's telegram, stating that the formal acceptance of the President's suggestion by the Russian Government was handed to the American Ambassador only on the 12th instant,—two days after the despatch of the Japanese acceptance. This fact has become generally known and has created a bad impression here. The idea is gaining ground that the Russian Government is endeavouring to make the world believe that Japan is suing for peace. Every section of the Japanese press is urging the Government not to be deceived by Russia, but to continue the war with the utmost vigour, until the plenipotentiaries, have met. There is also unanimity of opinion that an armistice should not be granted unless Russia gives up Vladivostock and Saghalien as a guarantee that the armistice will be observed.

⁽²⁾ [Some personal details here follow connected with the peace overtures of the United States to Japan.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

In the course of a conversation I had with Baron Komura this morning, I mentioned this subject of an armistice, pointing out that it would be difficult for peace plenipotentiaries to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, unless they had a fixed starting line, and if the war was to be carried on while the negotiations were still in progress, this line would be a moveable one, and, with the fortunes of war, would change from day to day. Baron Komura admitted the truth of this, but said that there was a precedent in the China-Japan war, negotiations having been carried on while the war was still in progress, and it was only when the Chinese plenipotentiary, Li Hung Chang, had been wounded by a fanatic that the Japanese Government, as an act of grace, granted an armistice. However, added His Excellency, the Japanese Government had no intention of granting an armistice unless, and until, they are asked to do so by the Russian Government: neither do they intend to relax for one moment the prosecution of the war by land and sea. Altogether the prospects that the President's well-meant overtures will lead to any successful issue are, at present, not promising, and much will depend upon the way in which Russia treats these overtures and conducts subsequent negotiations, and whether the Tzar and the War Party will recognize that Russia is beaten and act in a suitably chastened spirit. Of this much-to-be-desired frame of mind there is at present no sign.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MacDONALD.

[ED. NOTE.—A formal communication was made by the United States Minister at Tôkiô on June 9, offering the good offices of the President for the purpose. On the 10th the Japanese Government replied, agreeing to appoint plenipotentiaries to meet plenipotentiaries of Russia for the purpose of peace. The communications were published on the 12th.]

No. 84.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Washington, D. June 16, 1905.

Tel. (No. 65.) Secret.

R. June 17, 1905, 7:30 A.M.

I saw President last night. I found him in great spirits and very confident of satisfactory issue to his peace negotiations. Both Russians and Japanese are giving him some trouble, especially Russians, but he says that both mean business. He does not think that there will be an armistice for some time.

After meeting in Washington, Plenipotentiaries will probably move to some cooler and quieter place in the north.*

President says that our attitude of reserve seems to him wise and proper, and that any advice given by us hereafter will come with double force.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

**Perhaps the Rocky Mountains!*

E.R.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2578.

(No. 163.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 16, 1905.

The American Ambassador told me this afternoon that His Majesty The King had spoken to him at Windsor on the subject of the peace negotiations which were so fortunately about to commence between Russia and Japan. His Majesty had observed that the best thing to do was, in his opinion, to leave the negotiators alone. Mr. Whitelaw Reid had repeated this observation of the King's to the President, who had replied that he did not differ from His Majesty in believing that it was best that the parties should be left to themselves, but that he considered that at a later stage an opportunity might perhaps occur for giving useful advice to Japan in the direction of not pressing extreme demands. Mr. Reid added that between the lines of the Sec[retary] of State's despatch he thought he detected an impression that this country might be likely to create difficulties in the way of peace by encouraging Japan to insist upon excessive terms. I said that there could be no greater mistake than to imagine that we should interpose obstacles in the way of peace. As for advising Japan, it would in my opinion be inadvisable that we should take upon ourselves to tender such advice at a moment when we were not even aware of the terms for which she intended to ask.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1701.

(No. 396.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. June 20, 1905.

R. June 24, 1905.

More than a fortnight has now elapsed since the question of the possibility of putting an end to the present war by the conclusion of peace was first raised by the President of the United States and the pourparlers which were then initiated have so far met with success that an agreement has been arrived at between Russia and Japan to enter into negotiations, and the place of meeting of the plenipotentiaries has been fixed.

It is worthy of note that during the first days of June the language of those members of the court who are in closest proximity to the person of the Emperor was, as I know for a fact, uncompromisingly hostile to any suggestion of peace until at least one substantial victory had been obtained, while the reply of the Russian Government through Count Cassini to the President's first suggestion of peace negotiations would have been sufficient in itself to discourage any further steps in the same direction. President Roosevelt, with wise foresight, had in the meantime instructed the American Ambassador to submit his proposal directly to the Emperor himself, and Mr. Meyer's tact and skill appear to have amply fulfilled all expectations, since His Majesty, after only a short interval of hesitation, assented in principle to the opening of peace negotiations.

Whether Mr. Meyer's audience of the Emperor took place at a psychological moment when the futility of prolonging a hopeless campaign was at last brought home to the Emperor, or whether the fact of Monsieur Delcassé's resignation in

connection with the Morocco incident, the danger felt in France of an attack from Germany and the consequent obligations of Russia as the ally of France to help to resist any German aggression may not have influenced the Emperor and made His Majesty realise that in wasting blood and treasure uselessly in the Far East, Russia was sacrificing her position and authority in Europe and rendering her alliance valueless to France, or whether the change in His Majesty's attitude was due to some other cause, it is impossible except for those in the immediate entourage of the Emperor to say. It is however indisputable that a remarkable and unexpected change took place and on the day following Mr. Meyer's interview it was known that the President's initial effort to bring the two belligerents together had been crowned with success. Some suspicion of the motives of this *volte-face* was naturally aroused as it was known that the greatest anxiety prevailed in official circles to learn the extent of the conditions which Japan would demand, and as the payment of an indemnity, the cession of any territory, and the restriction of Russian Naval Power in Far Eastern waters were loudly and aggressively announced on all sides as humiliating conditions which it would be quite impossible to accept, it was generally felt that the prospect of a successful issue to the negotiations was improbable. This impression was enhanced by the unsatisfactory terms of the official communication issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs relating to the peace negotiations (enclosed in my despatch No. 389 of the 14th instant)⁽¹⁾ and by the supercilious attitude of the Russian Government towards Japan which made it difficult to be convinced of Russia's sincerity in really desiring peace or in seeking to make it on terms which would be regarded as compatible with the actual results of the war. Count Lamsdorff's statement to me on the 14th instant, which I hear he made to other Ambassadors on the same day, to the effect that the Emperor in accepting the proposal to enter into *pourparlers* with Japan had only been actuated by humanitarian principles, that Russia did not want peace unless Japan expressed a desire for it and was prepared to continue the war indefinitely, was quite in consonance with the arrogant tone in which it is customary in the press and in St. Petersburg to speak of the Japanese and which hardly corresponds with the actual achievements and relative positions of the two belligerents in the Far East.

There has however been an undoubted improvement in tone during the last few days and now that the second point to be agreed upon *i.e.*, the place of meeting, has been satisfactorily settled, circumstances appear to be steadily moving in the direction of peace and the interruption of negotiations once initiated is contrary to the teaching of history. The crucial moment will however arise when the Japanese Government communicate their conditions of peace, and, however moderate they may be, they will present an almost irresistible temptation to the advocates of war to proclaim them as humiliating and dishonourable to Russia and to try to make them a rallying cry with the view of giving to the war a popularity which it has never enjoyed and thus obtaining the means of carrying it on. It will then remain for the Emperor and the Russian Government to decide whether they prefer to save Russia's possessions in the Far East before they have been wrested from her, by making peace on conditions acceptable to the Japanese and probably comprising the payment of a moderate war indemnity, or whether they will wait till their possessions have been conquered and pay a heavy indemnity for their evacuation if the Japanese should consent to it.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

[ED. NOTE.—On June 28 the Russian Government officially announced that they were sending plenipotentiaries to Washington.]

No. 87.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. America 2578.

(No. 187.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 12, 1905.

I mentioned to Mr. Whitelaw Reid today that it had come to my knowledge that we were supposed by the Government of the United States to be lukewarm in our desire for peace between Japan and Russia, if indeed we did not regard with a certain amount of satisfaction the continuation of a struggle out of which both parties would emerge greatly weakened for some time to come. It was, I said, unnecessary for me to assure His Excellency that no Power was more desirous of seeing peace restored than this country. I mentioned in support of my statement the Prime Minister's reference to the subject on the occasion of the banquet given to His Excellency on his arrival in this country.

Mr. Whitelaw Reid said that he did not believe that the President entertained this view, although it was one which might possibly have been suggested to him by interested parties.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 88.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1701.

(No. 443.) Confidential.

My Lord,

*St. Petersburg, D. July 15, 1905.**R. July 22, 1905.*

It was only on the 9th instant that Monsieur Muravieff, Russian Ambassador in Rome, arrived in St. Petersburg, and although he commenced at once to select those who should accompany him to Washington as members of his staff and to make other preparations, it was already whispered that he would not proceed on his mission as Russian plenipotentiary to the peace conference, and that Monsieur Witte would be appointed in his place.

As I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 423 Confidential of the 4th instant,⁽¹⁾ the appointment of Monsieur Muravieff and Baron Rosen as Russian plenipotentiaries was made in opposition to the recommendations of Count Lamsdorff who, from the moment that the question of a peace conference was decided, had been anxious for the nomination of Monsieur Witte as First Plenipotentiary, but his intentions had been frustrated by the Emperor's opposition owing to His Majesty's personal dislike of that statesman. The reason given in the press for Monsieur Muravieff's withdrawal from the position to which he had been appointed is his alleged "grave illness," but as he has already left St. Petersburg on his return to Rome his illness happily does not appear to be very serious. His appointment as Russia's representative at Washington was not at all favourably received by the Russian press, stress was laid on his inexperience in diplomacy and on the absence of any special qualifications which might recommend him for the mission with which he had been entrusted. The language which he used regarding Japan when President of the Venezuelan Arbitration Commission at The Hague is an additional proof of the unsuitability of his appointment.

The announcement of Monsieur Witte's selection as First Plenipotentiary has been hailed with pleasure and the press is unanimous in its approval. His patriotism, ability as a statesman and technical knowledge of the many questions at issue are

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

quoted as justifying his nomination. What is more interesting is the fact that the appointment is one which Monsieur Witte himself has ardently desired and there is no doubt that he will spare no effort to make his mission a success. In this he will be ably seconded by Monsieur Pokotiloff, Russian Minister at Peking, now on his way to Washington, who was in close touch with Monsieur Witte when the latter was at the Ministry of Finance, and who is said to be equally imbued with the opinion of the absolute necessity of peace owing to the state of internal anarchy prevailing in Russia. It is interesting to note that Monsieur Witte has a very poor opinion of Baron Rosen, the second Russian Plenipotentiary, and of his ability, and it is unlikely that he will be in any way influenced by him or by his opinions which are bitterly anti-Japanese.

As special importance now attaches to Monsieur Witte's views on the possible conditions of peace, I venture to quote here an extract from my despatch No. 207 Secret in which I had the honour to report to Your Lordship the substance of a long conversation with Monsieur Witte on March 25 of this year, during which he expressed his personal views on the question of peace with remarkable frankness:—

“The campaign had been irretrievably lost and there only remained now to make the best terms possible with Japan and to be quit once for all of the Manchurian adventure. He would be ready to recognize Corea as under Japanese influence, Port Arthur with the Liaotung Peninsula and the railway to Kharbin as a Japanese leasehold and to agree, with a view to securing a durable peace, that there should for a term of years be no Russian warships in Chinese waters except those necessary for police and local purposes. He would however strongly oppose as quite unacceptable any condition entailing the payment of a war indemnity or the surrender of the Siberian line to Vladivostock. He would raise no objection to making Vladivostock an open port provided that the railway was guaranteed by the Powers from aggression on the part of the Japanese. These terms might be considered by many of his compatriots as too favourable to Japan, but he considered them to be in accordance with the true interests of Russia. He had never been in favour of the Manchurian adventure and had his advice been listened to the present deplorable situation might have been avoided. To continue the war at the present time would be a policy of madness not so much on account of the financial position as of the internal situation. In war time the equilibrium between paper and currency was everywhere thrown to the winds, but there yet remained the gold reserve which would serve for at least another year of war. He would sooner spend these millions on prolonging the war than in paying an indemnity to the Japanese. The internal situation was however so threatening and so infinitely worse than it had been at any time during the past three hundred years that it would in his opinion be absolutely impossible to continue the war without incurring the gravest risk of internal revolution.”

Four months have passed since Monsieur Witte used these words, and however grave the risk of internal revolution may then have been, there is not the slightest doubt that the risk is now infinitely greater. The conditions of peace then mentioned were the expression of Monsieur Witte's personal views and it must be remembered that the interview took place before the battle of the Tsushima Straits, before the outbreaks in Poland and the Caucasus and before the open disaffection of some of the ships of the Black Sea Fleet. If any confidence is to be placed in Monsieur Witte's words his appointment should be the surest guarantee of the approaching conclusion of peace, and his character being one in which ambition plays a considerable part, his own personal advantage would seem to point to a successful and peaceful termination of the mission which has been confided to him.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1701.

(No. 473.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. July 25, 1905.

My Lord,

R. July 31, 1905.

As I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 457 of the 20th instant⁽¹⁾ Mr. Witte left on the 19th instant for Paris *en route* for the United States to attend the Peace Conference to be convened there.

Although I had not the opportunity of a conversation with Mr. Witte before he left he appears to have spoken to the French Ambassador and to some of his friends with considerable freedom as to his plans and intentions. These have been retailed to me and are not without interest.

Mr. Witte remains as convinced as ever of the absolute necessity of peace and of escape from the Manchurian entanglement. His statements to the press of the strength and influence of the war party and of the danger to the prospects of peace to be apprehended from exaggerated demands on the part of Japan are, I believe, intended chiefly for Japanese and home consumption.

According to his written instructions, which are the same as those given to Mr. Mouravieff, neither the payment of an indemnity nor a cession of territory are to be accepted as possible conditions of peace.

Mr. Witte fully recognises that according to general public opinion the Japanese Government are entirely justified in their demand for a monetary contribution, but he maintains that this is a condition which is so opposed to the psychological character of the Russian mind, not merely amongst the Upper Classes but especially amongst the peasants, as to become impossible of discussion.

There is no doubt however that the probable necessity of having to pay an indemnity has been foreseen, and that a combination for disguising it has been already prepared.

I must admit, in corroboration of Mr. Witte's statement, that from what I hear from friends who have returned from disturbed districts in the country the peasants who last year were entirely opposed to the war are now in favour of its continuation, having been told that peace will entail the payment of an indemnity. This is no doubt partly explained by the fact that the only direct war tax which they pay amounts to about one shilling per annum, and they are under the belief that, in the event of an indemnity being paid to the Japanese, the whole of it would be levied upon them.

As regards the question of cession of territory Mr. Witte proposes to give the Japanese a lesson in modern history and to point out that Prince Bismarck made two important Treaties in 1866 and 1871. In the first he foresaw the future advantage of an Austrian alliance, and consequently in the Treaty of Prague of 1866 no territorial compensation was exacted from Austria for the losses sustained by Prussia during the war. In 1871 he recognised the fact that a powerful France could never be in harmony with the true aims and interests of Germany, and he therefore proceeded to weaken his enemy by the annexation of two provinces, an act which has resulted in rendering any working agreement between France and Germany as out of the question. So also if Japan shows wisdom and a desire to maintain friendly relations with Russia in the future and even to cooperate with her in the development of the joint interests of the two countries in the Far East the demand, which is anticipated, for a cession of territory should be withheld, any and every concession being granted to Japan so long as Russian sovereignty (or even suzerainty) over Sakhalin and Russian *amour-propre* are maintained intact.

These are the two rocks upon which it is fully recognised that the negotiations are likely to be wrecked, but in the audience which Mr. Witte had of the Emperor

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

on the day before he left, he proposed to His Majesty that simultaneously with the negotiations for peace he should negotiate an all round arrangement with Japan with a view to securing a durable peace for a long period of years in the Far East, of which an essential condition should be the adhesion of Great Britain or her recognition of the agreement, and a possible condition the accession of France. If it should be feasible to arrive at such an arrangement the difficulties respecting the cession of Sakhalin and the payment of an indemnity would be probably surmounted and the dignity of Russia would be saved. Mr. Witte fully recognised the futility of the idea of endeavouring to supplant the Anglo-Japanese by a Russo-Japanese alliance but he advocated an agreement with Japan to which Great Britain as the ally of Japan should also be a party or at least a sympathetic witness. It is said that the Emperor received Mr. Witte's proposals with marked approbation.

I am naturally unable to vouch for the absolute correctness of the above information but I know on reliable authority that Mr. Witte used language in that sense to several persons before he left, and my French colleague tells me that he believes it to be absolutely correct.

Whether the Japanese will see Mr. Witte's views in quite the same light and, in spite of their profound suspicion of Russian aims, will at this moment be equally desirous of making an all round agreement with Russia in the Far East is a matter upon which I do not venture to offer an opinion.

In the meantime a gigantic piece of bluff is being carried on by the press and Generals of the Manchurian army which is described as being in the most perfect condition, far more perfect than before, and anxiously awaiting the signal for attack when victory would be completely assured. Although no apparent reason is given why this signal is withheld, nor why immediate action is not taken by General Linievitch which if successful might entirely modify the situation when the peace congress meets in a fortnight's time, the fact remains that the Russian Army, except for some insignificant raids by Cossacks, remains on the defensive behind the fortifications which they have raised, and the exuberant telegrams from Generals and correspondents in Manchuria recall similar telegrams which appeared in the Russian press before the battles of Liao-yang and Mukden. The information received by the Embassies in St. Petersburg from the Attachés at the front give a very different account of the Russian armies at the seat of war.

Unfortunately for the prospects of peace this bluff is not without its effect upon the Emperor who, I am reliably informed, is much impressed by the telegrams promising victory which he is constantly receiving from his Generals, and is at the same time convinced that if only a decisive victory could be obtained it would not only present an occasion for concluding an honourable peace but that it would also serve as a panacea for all internal troubles nearer home, and would enable His Majesty to relegate all distasteful projects of constitutional reform to the distant future and to re-establish once more the bureaucratic autocracy on the solid basis which it enjoyed till a year ago.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 90.

Mr. Johnstone to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Denmark 585.

Tel. (No. 35.) Confidential.

Copenhagen, D. July 31, 1905, 11.10 P.M.

R. August 1, 1905, 7.30 A.M.

Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, who landed with the Emperor at 4 o'clock this afternoon, assures me that Emperor's visit is one of pure friendliness, and that

only subjects discussed between Emperor of Russia and German Emperor at their late meeting referred to peace negotiations and the internal state of Russia.

German Emperor strongly advised Emperor of Russia and Russia [*sic*] to make peace and institute internal reforms.

No. 91.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia, 1702.

(No. 482.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. August 1, 1905.

R. August 5, 1905.

Speculation continues on all sides as to what passed between the two Emperors during their interview at Borgo [*sic*], but nothing authentic is so far known.

I hear from a reliable source that the Emperor received Count Lamsdorff on the day after his return, and although His Majesty spoke to him of the various incidents of the short cruise which, being the first time that he had left his palace surroundings for the space of seven months, he seems to have thoroughly enjoyed, no mention was made of the political topics of conversation which had been under discussion between the two Emperors. All that is known is that the Emperor returned to Peterhof thoroughly pleased with his interview, and from this it is generally assumed that the Emperor William took pains to flatter the Emperor Nicholas, and to avoid giving any advice which might be distasteful to His Majesty.

The impression moreover appears to prevail that the German Emperor advised the Emperor Nicholas to continue the war unless satisfactory terms of peace could be obtained, renewing his promise that the western frontier of Russia would not be disturbed, and recommended that in order to obtain the support of the nation in prolonging the war liberal reforms should be granted.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This meeting resulted in the well known Treaty of Björko, signed between the Emperors Nicholas II and William II, with two witnesses only, on July 11/24. The text is here given for convenience from *G.P. XIX, II, p. 465.*

Leurs Majestés les Empereurs de toutes les Russies et d'Allemagne, afin d'assurer le maintien de la paix en Europe, ont arrêté les Articles suivants d'un Traité d'Alliance défensif.

ARTICLE I.

Au cas où l'un des deux Empires serait attaqué par une Puissance Européenne son allié l'aidera en Europe de toutes ses forces de terre et de mer.

ARTICLE II.

Les hautes parties contractantes s'engagent à ne conclure de paix séparée avec aucun adversaire commun.

ARTICLE III.

Le présent Traité entrera en vigueur aussitôt que la paix entre la Russie et le Japon sera conclue et restera tant qu'il ne sera pas dénoncé une année à l'avance.

ARTICLE IV.

L'Empereur de toutes les Russies, après l'entrée en vigueur de ce traité, fera les démarches nécessaires pour initier la France à cet accord et l'engager à s'y associer comme alliée.

WILHELM, I.R.

NICOLAS.

VON TSCHIRSCHKY UND BÖGENDORFF.

A. BIRILEFF.

According to Article III this Treaty came technically into force on October 14, 1905, when the Russo-Japanese Treaty was ratified, *v. infra*, p. 111, note ⁽²⁾. But it was in fact nullified because the Russian Ministers made its efficacy dependent on the consent of France, *v. G.P. XIX, II, ch. 138 passim*; *The Kaiser's Letters to the Tsar* (1920), pp. 123-47, Count Witte: *Mémoires* (1921), pp. 373-84, and *infra*, p. 202, note ⁽³⁾.

It is not clear that the British Government ever saw the text of the Björko Treaty. But Lord Newton has informed the Editors that Lord Lansdowne in a private letter to Mr. R. T. Tower of August 20, 1905, said that the communication received from him was the "only account having any pretence to authenticity of what passed" at Björko. No trace has been found of this communication in the Foreign Office Archives.]

I report this impression not because I believe in it, but because I believe it is inspired by the probability of what is about to take place.

There is no doubt that the Emperor has never been really in favour of peace, and that the acceptance by His Majesty of President Roosevelt's overtures was largely due to His Majesty's aversion to giving a point blank refusal to a proposal made personally to him by the United States' Ambassador and emanating from the Chief of another state. Moreover, the Emperor has, in spite of all the defeats suffered by the Russian arms during the war, been always absolutely convinced of the ultimate triumph of the Russian armies in the field. These circumstances together with the glowing reports received by His Majesty from the Generals in Manchuria as to the excellent condition and position of the Russian armies, of which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 473 of July 25,⁽²⁾ have encouraged the Emperor to assume an attitude towards the peace negotiations about to be opened which would render their satisfactory conclusion impossible except by the sacrifice of the advantages to which the Japanese may legitimately lay claim as the fruits of their series of victories on land and sea. This attitude is confirmed by a note made in the Emperor's own handwriting on a petition received from the clergy of Orenburg praying that a dishonourable peace should not be concluded which is couched in the following terms:—

“All true Russians can depend on my not concluding a dishonourable peace or one incompatible with Russia's greatness.”

This attitude on the part of the Emperor and the satisfactory accounts of the state of the army received from the front have produced a great change in public opinion, and I have no hesitation in saying that the chances of peace are now considerably less hopeful than they were a fortnight ago. The interviews given by Monsieur Sato, Baron Komura's secretary, to representatives of the American press, in which he is reported to have given a general outline of the Japanese conditions of peace, have made the worst possible impression in Russia, and the question is asked, where is the moderation in the Japanese terms which the Russian Government had been led to expect?

Although it is fully recognised by all intelligent persons in Russia that the Japanese have a moral right to an indemnity in some form, and that the island of Sakhalin now occupied by Japanese troops can never be reconquered during the present war, the change which has been effected during the past two weeks since the departure of Monsieur Witte for America would render even the concession of such moderate terms difficult in the present phase of public opinion.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 93-4, No. 89.]

No. 92.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1702.

(No. 497.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. August 15, 1905.

R. August 19, 1905.

The prospect of a peaceful conclusion of the negotiations now in progress at Portsmouth, U[nited] S[tates of] A[merica] has, since the publication in the press of what purported to be the Japanese terms, appeared to be even more doubtful than when I had the honour to address Your Lordship in my despatch No. 482 of the 1st instant.⁽¹⁾

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

Although evidently unauthentic, the alleged Japanese conditions have aroused a storm of protest in the press and public opinion appears to be unanimous that it would be preferable to continue the war rather than submit to such humiliating terms.

In spite of the prevalent pessimism, I have been confidentially informed that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs are not at all despondent of arriving at a satisfactory compromise with the Japanese plenipotentiaries now that the latter have shown their readiness to enter into discussion of the demands which they have put forward and have not, as was feared, communicated their conditions as the irreducible minimum of what they are prepared to accept. The question of an indemnity is not regarded as an insuperable obstacle to peace, nor the cession of Saghalien impossible if some concessions were offered in compensation. It is known that Monsieur Witte has prepared several combinations to overcome these two essential difficulties and it is hoped that one or other of them may prove acceptable to the Japanese.

The proposal to surrender the Russian ships of war interned in neutral ports would be firmly resisted as derogatory to the dignity of Russia, but it is not anticipated that this condition will be insisted upon. It is thought that the negotiations may be protracted, but that they will eventually be successful, and my informant who occupies a high position in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs remarked that he was ready to bet on peace.

Public opinion in Russia is apt to change rapidly and often without apparent reason, but it appears to me that any peace embodying in its outlines the terms communicated to Your Lordship by Viscount Hayashi would be very unpopular at the present moment and would provoke serious opposition. The Russian public do not reason, and, while accepting the absurd stories telegraphed to Russia of the financial bankruptcy of Japan and of the enrolment of old men, boys, and Koreans in the front rank of the Japanese Armies, they do not appreciate what the loss of Vladivostock and the Primorsky province would mean to the position of Russia on the shores of the Pacific, and they believe that they have only to continue a defensive retreat to wear out their enemy and to recover most, if not all, of the territory that they have lost.

If the condition of Russia were normal there would be much to recommend such a policy, but, in view of the serious danger presented by the internal situation and of the precarious position of Russian finances, it is evident that peace is of essential importance to Russia. All that she could hope for in prolonging the war indefinitely would be to exhaust her enemy while draining her own strength, ruining her finances and compromising her position in Europe as a Great Power.

I have, &c. .

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 93.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, August 18, 1905.

F.O. Japan 595.

D. 1.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 196.) Strictly Confidential.

R. 7 P.M.

My telegram No. 194.⁽¹⁾ Japanese terms of peace.

Prime Minister has just informed me following is result of negotiations up to date :—

Article I has been agreed to. Wording is practically the same as in Japanese Minister at London's draft, with the addition that Japan and Russia agree not to take any measures which might menace security of Korean frontier.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It gave a *précis* of the Russian reply to the Japanese terms. v. immediately preceding document.]

Article II and Article III made into one Article and agreed to in principle.

Article IV agreed to practically without discussion.

Article V. Cession of Sakhalin. Russians decline to consider this, and use arguments contained in Russian reply (my telegram above mentioned). Discussion postponed.

Article VI. Lease of Port Arthur, &c., agreed to with addition that both Russia and Japan undertake to obtain consent of Chinese Government to the aforesaid stipulation.

Article VII and Article VIII. Agreed to in principle.

Article IX. Indemnity; Article X, Interned ships of war; and Article XI, limitation of naval strength, are strongly opposed by the Russian Plenipotentiaries.

Article XII. Practically agreed to.

(Secret.)

Prime Minister seems, on the whole, hopeful. He recognizes that Article IX, regarding reimbursement of expenses, is the most serious of all, but he thinks when Russia thoroughly realizes her situation she will be reasonable.

Article X and Article XI, his Excellency thinks, will not present much difficulty.

As to the cession of Sakhalin: As Japan is already in possession, Japanese Government do not anticipate much difficulty in remaining so.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

This is more satisfactory than could have been expected.

E.R.

No. 94.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Japan 598.

(No. 220.) Very Confidential.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. August 18, 1905.

R. September 18, 1905.

I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of the terms of peace which were handed to me on the 14th inst[ant], also the full text of the Russian reply thereto, which I received from the Japanese Foreign Office on the 15th inst[ant].

This morning I saw the Prime Minister, when he was good enough to enter, with some detail, into the present state of the negotiations.

So far as Art[icle] 1 was concerned, which referred to the measures of guidance, protection, and control, which Japan might find it necessary to exercise in Corea, His Excellency said that no difficulty had been experienced, and the article had been agreed to in practically the form it was presented. On my asking whether the Russian Plenipotentiaries had pressed the point which appears in their reply, namely that the measures to be taken would not "bring prejudice to the sovereign rights of the Emperor of Corea," His Excellency said that this point had been pressed and a note had been inserted in the *procès-verbal*. His Excellency then went to his study and brought back the Japanese copy of the note, which was verbally translated by Mr. Matsui, Acting Chief of the Political Bureau, who was again in attendance.

⁽¹⁾ [The Japanese terms (*encl.* 1) had been communicated privately to Lord Lansdowne on the 12th, *v.* Lord Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald, No. 140 of August 12, 1905, F.O. Japan 590.]

It ran as follows:—"Japanese Government declare that the measures which they find it necessary to take in Corea and which affect the Sovereign rights of the Emperor of Corea will be taken after consultation with His Majesty." This note will not appear in the Treaty of Peace.

The following was added to Art[icle] I. "Japan and Russia agree not to take any military measures which might menace general security on the Korean frontier." His Excellency explained that the wording was only approximate, as it had not been definitely decided upon, though the sense was as stated.

Art[icles] II and III, relating to the evacuation of Manchuria, had been arranged as one article, and had been agreed to in principle. Art[icle] IV, in which both Powers engage not to obstruct general measures, common to all countries, which China may take for the development of commerce and industries of Manchuria, was agreed to without discussion.

Art[icle] V, relating to the cession of Saghalien, gave rise to considerable discussion, and ultimately it was set aside for further discussion. The Russian Plenipotentiaries used the arguments set forth in their reply; as, however, the Japanese are in complete possession of the island, I do not think they will yield this point.

Art[icle] VI, which relates to the transfer of the Russian lease of Port Arthur Talienwan and adjacent territories to Japan, and Article VII, respecting the portion of the Manchurian Railway, were both agreed to in principle, but a clause to the following effect had been added:—

"Both Japan and Russia undertake to obtain the consent of China to the aforesaid arrangement."

Art[icle] VIII, which stipulates that Russia is to retain and work part of the Trans-Manchurian Railway on the terms and conditions of the concession under which it was constructed, was agreed to in principle.

Art[icle] IX, which stipulates that Russia is to reimburse to Japan the actual expenses of the war, met, as the Japanese Government expected, with the strongest opposition. With regard to this article, Count Katsura said that it had been specially worded to prevent hurting the feelings of the Russian Government, the word indemnity had not been used, and no specific sum had been mentioned.

With regard to Art[icle] X, respecting the restoration of interned ships of war, and Art[icle] XI, in which Russia engages to limit her naval strength, no progress had been made.

Art[icle] XII, respecting the granting to Japanese subjects of fishing rights on the Russian coast of the Japan, Okhotsh and Behring Seas, had been practically settled.

From the general tone of Count Katsura's remarks, I gathered that he was fairly hopeful of the successful outcome of the negotiations. He said that Japan did not expect to have all her terms agreed to without discussion, but was prepared to meet the Russian Counter-proposals in a fair and reasonable spirit.

The Russians talked a great deal about their dignity, and seemed very anxious to "save their face"—but they must remember that they had been invariably beaten both on sea and land, so that their dignity was somewhat impaired, and their face had also been damaged; personally he thought the Russian Government would see the folly of carrying on the war and would ultimately give way. He was, therefore, hopeful of the result of the peace negotiations.

If, however, the Russian Government wished to continue the war, His Excellency added, the Japanese Government and people were as one in their readiness to do so.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

Enclosure 1 in No. 94.

Japanese Terms of Peace.

Strictly Confidential.

I. Russia, acknowledging that Japan possess in Corea paramount political, military and economical interests, to engage not to obstruct or interfere with any measures of guidance, protection and control which Japan finds it necessary to take in Corea.

II. Engagement on the part of Russia completely to evacuate Manchuria within a period to be specified, and to relinquish all territorial advantages and all preferential and exclusive concessions and franchises in that region in impairment of Chinese sovereignty or inconsistent with principle of equal opportunity.

III. Japan to engage to restore to China, subject to guarantee of reform and improved administration, all those portions of Manchuria which are in her occupation, saving only the regions affected by lease of the Liaotung Peninsula.

IV. Japan and Russia reciprocally to engage not to obstruct any general measures common to all countries which China may take for the development of commerce and industries of Manchuria.

V. Sakhalin and all islands appertaining thereto and all public works and properties to be ceded to Japan.

VI. The lease of Port Arthur, Ta-lien and adjacent territory and territorial waters together with all rights, privileges, and franchises, acquired by Russia from China in connection with or as a part of such lease and all public works and properties to be transferred and assigned to Japan.

VII. Russia to assign and transfer to Japan free of all claims and encumbrances railway between Harbin and Port Arthur and all its branches privileges and properties appertaining thereto and all coal mines belonging to or worked for the benefit of the railway.

VIII. Russia to retain and work Trans-Manchurian railway, subject to the terms and conditions of the concession, under which it was constructed and subject also to the condition, that it is to be employed exclusively for commercial and industrial purposes.

IX. Russia to reimburse to Japan actual expenses of the war, the amount as well as the time and manner of such reimbursement to be agreed upon.

X. All Russian ships of war, which in consequence of damage received in battle, sought asylum in neutral ports and were there interned, to be surrendered to Japan as lawful prizes.

XI. Russia to engage to limit her naval strength in the waters of the extreme East.

XII. Russia to grant to Japanese subjects full fishery rights along the coast and in the bays, harbours, inlets and rivers of her possession in Japan, Okhotsk and Bering Seas.

KOMURA.

Enclosure 2 in No. 94.

Russian Reply to Japanese Demands.⁽²⁾

Strictly confidential.

1. Article 1 does not call for any objection. Imperial Government, recognizing that Japan possesses in Corea paramount political, military and economical interests, are ready to engage neither to obstruct nor interfere with measures of guidance, protection and control which Japan will consider necessary to take in Corea. It is a matter of course that Russia and Russian subjects will enjoy all rights which belong or will belong to other foreign Powers and their subjects or citizens. Also it is understood that execution by Japan of the above mentioned measures will not bring prejudice to

⁽²⁾ [v. also in shorter form in Tel. No. 194, Sir C. MacDonald to Lord Lansdowne, D. August 15, R. August 16. F.O. Japan 595.]

the sovereign rights of the Emperor of Corea. As to the military measures particularly, Japan, in order to remove any cause of misunderstanding, will abstain from taking measures which might menace security of Russian territory on the frontier of Corea.

2. Imperial Government are ready to accept the first part of this article and are disposed to evacuate her troops from Manchuria simultaneously with evacuation of Japanese troops. Details and terms of evacuation might be decided afterwards. As to the last part of this article, Imperial Government are ready to declare that they have no claims to territorial privileges, exclusive concessions or facilities which would be of such nature as to menace sovereign right of the Empire of China and which would be inconsistent with principle of equality of rights. Imperial Government are disposed to give to that effect necessary guarantees. This fundamental principle once established, Plenipotentiaries of Russia propose to Plenipotentiaries of Japan to make precise the desire of Japanese Government regarding this part of Article II and they declare that Imperial Government are disposed to eliminate anything that may bring prejudice to the interests of Japan or other Powers. The only Russian private enterprise in Manchuria having public character is the East Chinese Railway. The examination of question connected with this railway is specially treated also in other article.

3. Imperial Government are ready to accept this article but it is matter of course that Russia and Russian subjects shall conserve in these portions of Manchuria all rights which belong or will belong in those regions to other foreign Powers and their subjects or citizens. As to the region affected by lease of the Liaotung Peninsula, Russia is disposed to cede to Japan her rights in the regions in question. However considering sovereign right of China in these regions and the treaties concluded to that effect with the Chinese Government, such cession may not be made but by virtue of an understanding with the latter.

4. Acceding entirely to the principles laid down in Art[icle] 1, Imperial Government declare that if this stipulation had not been inserted in the conditions proposed by Japan Russia would have had duty of proposing it herself.

5. The ancient rights of Russia on the island of Saghalien existed already at an epoch when Japan did not possess or at least did not exercise any rights of proprietorship on the greater part of this island; on the other hand, Saghalien is only natural continuation of Russian possession in Asia, as this island is separated from the Continent by a strait of a very little depth and a length of seven versts. From these considerations Russia would be unable to consent to a cession of this island, but she is quite disposed to admit to Japan right of wide exploitation of sea fishery and other commercial enterprises in this island. Conditions of such exploitation may be the object of special arrangement.

6. Imperial Government would have no objection to this article; but considering sovereign rights of China on the territories enumerated, Russia could not cede her rights to Japan without the previous agreement with China. It is a matter of course that the rights of private individuals in the whole regions affected by lease concluded between Russia and China should remain intact.

7. Imperial Government accept in principle this article on condition, however, that they could abandon only the part of railway which is actually occupied in fact by Japanese troops. Terminus of each portion of railway to be ceded on these conditions shall be determined on common accord. It is, however, indispensable to keep in view that it is to a private company that the concession for constructing and exploiting the line has been granted by China, which conserves sovereign rights thereon and that military occupation should bring no prejudice to the rights of this Company. Imperial Government are ready to take upon themselves to arrange with the said Company authorizing Chinese Government to exercise from now right of purchasing line in question. Premium of the purchase accruing to Company will be ceded to Japan. By virtue of Section 2 of the Act of August 27th (Sep[tember] 8th) 1896, granting to Russo-Chinese Bank the construction of railway, act of which was confirmed by the Convention of June 12th (June 29th), 1898, for the construction

of South Manchurian branch, Chinese Government has right to purchase line at the expiration of the term of 36 years from the day of completion and opening line.

8. This Article will not call for any objection. The Railway Company will strictly conform, concerning exploitation of the main line of Manchuria as well as portion of South Manchurian branch which will remain in its possession, to the terms of Act of Concession of August 27th (Sept[ember] 8th), paragraph 8 of which stipulates that troops as well as war material of Russia which will be transported by the line should not make stop in Chinese territory.

9. Russia would be unable to consent to stipulation of this Article. Only vanquished countries reimburse expenses of war, but Russia is not vanquished. A country will be unable to recognize itself as such, while its territory has hardly been attacked by enemy. Even if Japan will have taken all maritime provinces of Amur, vital force of Russia will be in no wise impaired, and she will continue struggle. Only in case when victorious Japanese army would have invaded interior of Russia might nation understand that the question of reimbursement of war expenses could be brought forth. Plenipotentiaries of Russia believe it their duty to call the attention of Plenipotentiaries of Japan to the fact that, even at the Congress of Paris which took place after the fall of Sevastopol, the allies did not believe it possible to raise the question of reimbursement of war expenses. Such expenses are reimbursed only by countries which have no more means of continuing war. Such is in no way the case with Russia. While refusing to reimburse war expenses, Imperial Government will recognize it equitable to indemnify Japan of such as she would have incurred, not for war itself and to prejudice of Russia, but for welfare of those Russians who suffered from act of war; such are expenses for the maintenance of war prisoners, for the care of sick and other persons.

10. Russia will be unable to consent to this demand. It would appear difficult to find out, in practice of international relations, precedent which might serve as the support of such demand. Besides, this demand is hardly in accord with pacific intention, with which the two negotiating parties should be animated. Material advantages, which could be acquired by Japan in case when Russian vessels remaining in neutral ports should be assigned to her, would be comparatively slight. Moreover, consent to such clause would be incompatible with dignity of Russia.

11. Russia would be unable to consent to succumbing engagements imposed by a foreign power, as this would be equally incompatible with her dignity. Imperial Government believe themselves, however, to be in a position to declare that it is not in their mind to keep in near future any considerable naval force in the waters of the Pacific.

12. Russia will be ready to arrange with Japan for granting to Japanese subjects rights of fishery on the coasts of Japan, Okhotsk and Behring Seas. These rights, however, can only be extended to coasts of these seas themselves without including inlets and rivers. It is a matter of course that the rights already appertaining in this region to the Russian or foreign subjects should remain in force.⁽³⁾

(3) [For German influences. v. G.P. XIX, II, chs. 137, 139.]

No. 95.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 595.

Tel. (No. 197.) Most Secret.

Following information was imparted to me this afternoon by the Prime Minister—

At the last formal meeting held on Friday August 18th the discussion regarding

Tōkiō, August 20, 1905.

D. 5:30 P.M.

R. 6:50 P.M.

article 9, payment of war expenses, became very heated. Finally as a compromise Japanese Plenipotentiaries undertook that if their Russian Colleagues would discuss this Article and Article 5, cession of Sakhalin, in a reasonable and conciliatory spirit Japan would withdraw article 10 relative to interned ships of war, and article 11 relative to limitation of naval strength.

No reply was given by the Russian Plenipotentiaries but there have since been several secret meetings between Russian and Japanese Plenipotentiaries, and the compromise has been discussed by them unofficially. It has been referred home to the respective Gov[ernmen]ts for instructions.

On asking Prime Minister whether he would have any objection to tell me for the secret information of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t what instructions the Japanese Gov[ernmen]t proposed to give their Rep[resentati]ves regarding this point, H[is] E[xc]ellency said that as an evidence of the confidence and good feeling which the Japanese Gov[ernmen]t had towards H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t, he would tell me that Japanese Gov[ernmen]t considered Japan should be repaid her actual war expenses, but that so far as Sakhalin was concerned, Japan would be prepared to modify her demand.

He begged most cordially that Y[our L[ordship]] would treat this information as absolutely secret and he trusted that the British Gov[ernmen]t would recognize that Japan was doing her utmost by these concessions to bring about peace.

No. 96.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 595.

Tel. (No. 199.) Most Secret.

Peace Negotiations.

Tôkiô, D. August 24, 1905, 4 P.M.

R. August 25, 1905, 8 A.M.

Prime Minister informed me this morning that the state of the negotiations was at present as follows:—

Plenipotentiaries having received replies from their respective Governments to the queries mentioned in my telegram No. 197 of 20th August,⁽¹⁾ met on the 22nd, and again on the 23rd. Russian Plenipotentiaries stated that Russian Government were unable to agree to compromise suggested by the Japanese Plenipotentiaries with regard to withdrawal of Article X referring to interned ships and Article XI with reference to limitation of naval force and the modification of Article V regarding the cession of Sakhalin. M. Witte had privately suggested that "reimbursement of war expenses" might be further toned down by calling it a sum of money in repayment of certain concessions granted by Japan to Russia in Sakhalin. This change Japanese Government also accepted, but neither this nor the other concessions above mentioned appear to have met with the approval of the Russian Government.

Russian Plenipotentiaries have asked for a further meeting on 26th August at 3 P.M. Japanese Government have agreed.

Prime Minister thinks either that Russia intends to break off negotiations or that the various elements of which the Russian Government are composed cannot arrive at a decision, and have therefore asked for further delay. Prime Minister points out that in these negotiations Japan has used every effort to conciliate Russia, and to "save her face."

To this end Articles X and XI which were supposed to humiliate Russia have been withdrawn, and an offer to modify Article V has been made; the word

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

"indemnity" has been avoided and reimbursement of war expenses substituted, and now payment of a sum of money in return for concessions in Sakhalin has been substituted, but all apparently to no purpose.

Japanese Government, in the interests of humanity, are most anxious for peace, but they do not wish for peace at any price, and if Russia is determined to carry on the war, Japan is ready.

On my asking to what extent the Japanese Government were prepared to modify Article V, his Excellency said that that depended upon extent to which Russian Government were prepared to accept Article IX respecting reimbursement.

No. 97.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Tel. (No. 92.)

Lenox, August 24, 1905.

Confidential. President writes under date of yesterday asking me to let you know his views about Conference.⁽¹⁾ He has told Japanese that the opinion of the civilized world will not support them in continuing the war merely for the purpose of extorting money from Russia. He thinks that they would be right in continuing the war if Russia refused to cede Sakhalin but in as much as they wish to hold all they have taken it is difficult to see what possible claim they have for a heavy indemnity. President points out that if Japanese continue the war all they can possibly get is Eastern Siberia

⁽¹⁾ [The text, enclosed in No. 127 from Sir M. Durand, D. August 25, R. September 4, America 2580, is as follows:—

President Roosevelt to Sir M. Durand.

(Confidential.)

My dear Mr. Ambassador,

Oyster Bay, New York, August 23, 1905.

In my judgment every true friend of Japan should tell it as I have already told it,⁽²⁾ that the opinion of the civilized world will not support it in continuing the war merely for the purpose of extorting money from Russia. Of the twelve points submitted by Japan to Russia their plenipotentiaries have in substance agreed to about eight. Two others, which were on their face foolish, have been abandoned by the Japanese. There remain the questions of Sakhalin and the indemnity. Sakhalin is now practically Japanese and the Japanese would be entirely right in continuing the war if Russia refused to give it up, for this would amount simply to a foolish attempt by Russia to reconquer it. But inasmuch as Japan wishes to hold everything she has taken it is difficult to see what possible claim she has for a heavy indemnity. She announces that she does not wish east Siberia, apparently for the reason that it would be a white elephant on her hands. Yet if she continues the war all she can possibly get is east Siberia, and this after an expenditure which will probably amount to at least five or six hundred millions of dollars together with countless lives, with undoubted national exhaustion and with the feeling of the civilized world turning against her; not to speak of the possibility of reverses, which, though in my judgment not great, must yet be taken into account. It seems to me that the greatest act of friendship which the friends of Japan can at this time show her is to do as I have already done, and urge her in her own interest not to follow a course which might do her great damage, and can do her no real benefit. If the Russians persist in refusing reasonable terms and make it evident to the world that the war is continued, because of their own blind obstinacy and stupidity, then Japan will not be hurt but on the contrary will have general sympathy and will have to do the best that she can. But if Japan shows to the world that she is fighting simply to get money I think the effect will be bad upon her in every way, and that, moreover, there is a fair chance that in the end she will find she has lost more money, instead of getting any. I wish your people could get my views.

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt* (1925), pp. 268-9, which contains a confidential letter from President Roosevelt to Baron Kaneko.]

which they do not want, and this after great expenditure and loss of life with the feeling of the civilized world turning against them and a possibility of reverses. It seems to him the greatest act of friendship to urge Japan in her own interest not to follow a course which may do her great damage and can do her no real benefit.

MINUTE.

This is a suggestion that we should press the Japanese to make further concessions. Were we to do so our advice would not be taken and would be resented. I am in commun[icatio]n with Mr. Balfour as to the course to be taken.

L.

No. 98.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Tel. (No. 93.)

Lenox, August 24, 1905.

Sir D. MacKenzie Wallace says Russian envoys declare they will not give way on question of indemnity. They admit they may receive orders from St. Petersburg to do so but their information is to the effect that warlike feeling is particularly strong at present at Peterhof. Times Correspondent also says Kaneko belongs to the party which desires alliance with Russia.

No. 99.

Copy of Telegram sent by President Roosevelt to the Emperor Nicholas II, August 25, 1905.⁽¹⁾

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir C. MacDonald, No. 233 of August 30, 1905, R. October 2, 1905.)

F.O. Japan 593.

I feel bound to approach Your Majesty once more, and, lest there should have been any misunderstanding of my previous telegram, to explain its meaning further. I appeal to Your Majesty, praying that, guided by your conscience, you may be disposed to accept the compromise, which has been drawn up by the plenipotentiaries of Russia and Japan.

A telegram received this morning from St. Petersburg announces that Count Lamsdorff had declared the payment of an indemnity and the cession of territory by Russia to be impossible. The signification of this is that the war must be continued.

If war is continued it is certain that Japan will meet with very considerable difficulties; but it is to be feared that Russia would meet with such calamities as she has never before suffered in her history. According to the opinions of experts, which have reached me from various quarters, the Russian army cannot stand against that of Japan, and in due course, Vladivostock, Harbin and all Eastern Siberia will fall into the hands of the Japanese, and thus Russia, which has never lost an inch of her territory from the days of Ivan the Terrible, on, will see her possessions taken by the enemy.

It is, therefore, earnestly to be desired that peace should be established upon the basis of the compromise.

The plenipotentiaries of the two countries should decide as to the payment to be made for half of Saghalin, and if they are unable to come to an agreement on the

⁽¹⁾ [cp. Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt* (1925), pp. 272-4, which contains another communication of this date.]

matter, then persons of the highest rank in Great Britain and France might be requested to make an estimate of the amount to be paid, which they would communicate to the plenipotentiaries. If this plan were to be adopted, either Japan might designate an English and Russia a French functionary, or else the two Governments might accept persons nominated by the Governments of Great Britain and France. The plenipotentiaries need not be bound to accept the estimate thus made.

If Your Majesty will accede to this suggestion, I will communicate it to the Japanese Government. My sole object in making it is, in the interests of Japan and Russia, and in the interests of humanity, to put an end to useless bloodshed and to restore peace between the two countries.

No. 100.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. America 2581.

Lenox, September 1, 1905.

Tel. (No. 98A.)

R. 9 A.M.

The President sends me copies of messages sent by (group left out ? him) to U[nited] S[tates] Ambassador at St. Petersburg on Aug[ust] 21st, Aug[ust] 23rd and Aug[ust] 25th and copies of two letters addressed to Kaneko on Aug[ust] 22 and Aug[ust] 23rd.⁽¹⁾ He suggests my telegraphing the letters for your confidential information. The messages to U[nited] S[tates] Ambassador at St. Petersburg urge Russia to make peace on basis of division of Sakhalin, Russia paying redemption money for the northern half and Okuba (Russian prisons). The letters contain appeal to Japanese not to continue the war for indemnity. Text of last letter is as follows: "It seems to me that it is to the interest of the great empire of Nippon now to make peace for two reasons: (i) self-interest; (ii) the interest of the world to which she owes a certain duty.

Remember I do not speak of continuing the war rather than give up Sakhalin which I think would be right, but of continuing the war in order to get a great sum of money from Russia which I think would be wrong. Of course you may succeed in getting it but in my judgment even this success would be too dearly paid for and if you failed to get the money no additional humiliations and losses inflicted on Russia would repay Japan for the additional expenditure in blood, in money, in national exhaustion.

I. It is in Japan's interest now to close the war. She has won the control over Corea and Manchuria; she has disorganized the majority of her own fleet in destroying that of Russia; she has Port Arthur, Dalny and the Manchurian Railway; she has Sakhalin. It is not worth her while to continue the war for money when so to continue would probably eat up more money than she could at the end get back from Russia. She will be wise now to close the war in triumph and to take henceforward seat as a leading member at the Council table of the nations. II. Ethically it seems to me that Japan owes a duty to the world at this crisis. The civilized world looks to her to make peace; the nations believe in her; let her show her leadership in matters ethical no less than in matters military. The appeal is made to her in the name of all that is lofty and noble; and to this appeal I hope she will not be deaf."

⁽¹⁾ [v. Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt*, (1925), pp. 268-9, 274. Messages from the President to the Emperor William II of August 16, 21, are in *G.P.* XIX, II, pp. 615-21.]

Imperial Order submitted to the Senate by the Minister of Justice.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir C. Hardinge, No. 620 of October 18, 1905,
R. October 23, 1905.⁽¹⁾)

F.O. Russia 1703.
(Translation.)

As to the Ratification of the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Japan,
signed at Portsmouth 23rd August, 1905.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, by a letter (No. 5450) dated 2nd October 1905, informed the Minister of Justice, that on the first day of the same month His Imperial Majesty had been graciously pleased to ratify the Treaty of Peace, signed at Portsmouth on 23rd August [5 September], 1905, between Russia and Japan, and that in virtue of a special agreement with the Japanese Government, the mutual notifications that the ratification of the Treaty had been effected followed on the 2nd October 1905,—that to the Imperial Government being made through the Representative of the United States of America at St. Petersburg, and that to the Japanese Government through the French Representative at Tokio.

The Minister of Justice, on the 3rd [16th] October 1905, handed to the Senate, for publication, the text, as communicated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the above-mentioned Treaty, with that of two articles, supplementary thereto, together with a Russian translation of the same.

By God's assisting grace We, Nicholas the Second, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, &c. &c.,

Hereby declare that by mutual agreement between Ourselves and His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, Our Plenipotentiaries have concluded and signed at Portsmouth on the 23rd August [5 September] 1905 a Treaty of Peace, which word for word reads as follows :—

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, d'une part, et Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon, d'autre part, étant animés du désir de rétablir les bienfaits de la paix pour Leurs pays et pour Leurs peuples, ont décidé de conclure un Traité de Paix et ont nommé à cet effet Leurs Plénipotentiaires, savoir :

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie : Son Excellence M. Serge Witte, Son Secrétaire d'Etat et Président du Comité des Ministres de l'Empire de Russie et Son Excellence le Baron Roman Rosen, Maître de la Cour Impériale de Russie et Son Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire auprès des États-Unis d'Amérique; et

Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon : Son Excellence le Baron Komura Jutaro, Iusammi, grand cordon de l'ordre Impérial du Soleil Levant, Son Ministre des Affaires Étrangères et Son Excellence M. Takahira Kogoro, Iusammi, grand cordon de l'ordre Impérial du Trésor Sacré, Son Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire auprès des États-Unis d'Amérique;

Lesquels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, ont conclu les Articles suivants :—

ARTICLE I.

Il y aura à l'avenir paix et amitié entre Leurs Majestés l'Empereur de toutes les Russies et l'Empereur du Japon, ainsi qu'entre Leurs États et sujets respectifs.

(1) [Sir C. Hardinge's despatch enclosed a printed paper giving the text of the Imperial Order in Russian, the treaty in French (with a Russian translation), and the ratification in Russian. Sir C. Hardinge enclosed also an English translation of the Imperial Order and ratification. The French text of the treaty is here reproduced, together with the English translation of the Imperial Order and ratification. The English translation of the treaty is given in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 98, p. 785 sqq.]

ARTICLE II.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie, reconnaissant que le Japon possède en Corée des intérêts prédominants politiques, militaires et économiques, s'engage à ne point intervenir ni mettre d'obstacles aux mesures de direction, de protection et de contrôle que le Gouvernement Impérial du Japon pourrait considérer nécessaire de prendre en Corée.

Il est entendu que les sujets Russes en Corée seront traités exactement de la même manière que les ressortissants des autres pays étrangers, à savoir qu'ils seront placés sur le même pied que les ressortissants de la nation la plus favorisée.

Il est de même convenu que pour éviter toute cause de malentendu, les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes s'abstiendront, sur la frontière Russo-Coréenne, de prendre toute mesure militaire qui pourrait menacer la sécurité du territoire Russe ou Coréen.

ARTICLE III.

La Russie et le Japon s'engagent mutuellement :

1. A évacuer complètement et simultanément la Manchourie, à l'exception du territoire sur lequel s'étend le bail de la presqu'île de Liao-tong, conformément aux dispositions de l'Article additionnel I annexé à ce traité; et

2. restituer entièrement et complètement à l'administration exclusive de la Chine toutes les parties de la Manchourie qui sont occupées maintenant par les troupes Russes et Japonaises, ou qui sont sous leur contrôle, à l'exception du territoire susmentionné.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie déclare qu'il n'a point en Manchourie d'avantages territoriaux ou concessions préférentielles ou exclusives de nature à porter atteinte à la souveraineté de la Chine ou incompatibles avec le principe d'opportunité égale.

ARTICLE IV.

La Russie et le Japon s'engagent réciproquement à ne mettre aucun obstacle aux mesures générales qui s'appliquent également à toutes les nations et que la Chine pourrait prendre pour le développement du commerce et de l'industrie en Manchourie.

ARTICLE V.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie cède au Gouvernement Impérial du Japon, avec le consentement du Gouvernement de Chine, le bail de Port-Arthur, de Talien et des territoires et eaux territoriales adjacents, ainsi que tous les droits, privilèges et concessions se rattachant à ce bail ou en faisant partie, et il cède, de même, au Gouvernement Impérial du Japon tous les travaux et propriétés publics dans le territoire sur lequel s'étend le bail susmentionné.

Les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes s'engagent mutuellement à obtenir du Gouvernement de Chine le consentement mentionné dans la stipulation ci-dessus.

Le Gouvernement Impérial du Japon donne de sa part l'assurance que les droits de propriété des sujets russes dans le territoire susmentionné seront parfaitement respectés.

ARTICLE VI.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie s'engage à céder au Gouvernement Impérial du Japon, sans compensation, avec le consentement du Gouvernement de Chine, le chemin de fer Tehan-Tchoun (Kouan-Tchien-Tsy) et Port-Arthur et tous ses embranchements avec tous les droits, privilèges et propriétés y appartenant dans cette région, ainsi que toutes les mines de charbon dans ladite région, appartenant à ce chemin de fer ou en exploitation pour son profit.

Les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes s'engagent mutuellement à obtenir du Gouvernement de Chine le consentement mentionné dans la stipulation ci-dessus.

ARTICLE VII.

La Russie et le Japon s'engagent à exploiter leurs chemins de fer respectifs en Manchourie exclusivement dans un but commercial et industriel, mais nullement dans un but stratégique.

Il est entendu que cette restriction ne s'applique pas aux chemins de fer dans le territoire sur lequel s'étend le bail de la presqu'île de Liao-tong.

ARTICLE VIII.

Les Gouvernements Impériaux de Russie et du Japon, en vue de favoriser et de faciliter les relations et le trafic, concluront, aussitôt que possible, une convention séparée, pour le règlement de leurs services de raccordement de chemins de fer en Manchourie.

ARTICLE IX.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie cède au Gouvernement Impérial du Japon en perpétuité et en pleine souveraineté la partie sud de l'île de Sakhaline et toutes les îles qui y sont adjacentes, ainsi que tous les travaux et propriétés publiques qui s'y trouvent. Le cinquantième parallèle de latitude nord est adopté comme la limite du territoire cédé.—La ligne frontière exacte de ce territoire sera déterminée conformément aux dispositions de l'Article additionnel II annexé à ce Traité.

Le Japon et la Russie conviennent mutuellement de ne construire dans leurs possessions respectives sur l'île de Sakhaline et sur les îles qui y sont adjacentes aucune fortification ni travaux militaires semblables. De même, ils s'engagent respectivement à ne prendre aucune mesure militaire qui pourrait entraver la libre navigation des Détroits de Lapérouse et de Tartarie.

ARTICLE X.

Il est réservé aux sujets Russes habitants du territoire cédé au Japon de vendre leurs propriétés immobilières et de se retirer dans leur pays; mais, s'ils préfèrent rester dans le territoire cédé, ils seront maintenus et protégés dans le plein exercice de leurs industries et droits de propriété à la condition de se soumettre aux lois et à la juridiction japonaises. Le Japon aura la pleine liberté de retirer le droit de résidence dans ce territoire à tous les habitants se trouvant dans l'incapacité politique ou administrative, ou de les déporter de ce territoire. Il s'engage toutefois à ce que les droits de propriété de ces habitants soient pleinement respectés.

ARTICLE XI.

La Russie s'engage à s'entendre avec le Japon pour concéder aux sujets Japonais des droits de pêche le long des côtes des possessions Russes dans les Mers du Japon, d'Okhotsk et de Behring.

Il est convenu que l'engagement susmentionné ne portera pas atteinte aux droits déjà appartenant aux sujets Russes ou étrangers dans ces régions.

ARTICLE XII.

Le Traité de Commerce et de Navigation entre la Russie et le Japon ayant été annulé par la guerre, les Gouvernements Impériaux de Russie et du Japon s'engagent à adopter, comme base de leurs relations commerciales, jusqu'à la conclusion d'un nouveau traité de commerce et de navigation sur la base du Traité qui était en vigueur antérieurement à la guerre actuelle, le système du traitement réciproque sur le pied de la nation la plus favorisée, y compris les tarifs d'importation et d'exporta-

tion, les formalités de douane, les droits de transit et de tonnage, et l'admission et le traitement des agents, des sujets et des vaisseaux d'un pays dans le territoire de l'autre.

ARTICLE XIII.

Aussitôt que possible après la mise en vigueur du présent Traité, tous les prisonniers de guerre seront réciproquement restitués. Les Gouvernements Impériaux de Russie et du Japon nommeront, chacun de son côté, un Commissaire spécial qui se chargera des prisonniers. Tous les prisonniers se trouvant entre les mains de l'un des Gouvernements seront remis au Commissaire de l'autre Gouvernement, ou à son représentant, dûment autorisé, qui les recevra en tel nombre et dans tels ports convenables de l'État remettant que ce dernier aura notifié d'avance au Commissaire de l'État recevant.

Les Gouvernements de Russie et du Japon présenteront l'un à l'autre, le plus tôt possible, après que la remise des prisonniers aura été achevée, un compte documenté des dépenses directes faites respectivement par eux pour le soin et l'entretien des prisonniers depuis la date de la capture ou de la reddition jusqu'à celle de la mort ou de la remise. La Russie s'engage à rembourser au Japon, aussitôt que possible, après l'échange de ces comptes, comme il est stipulé ci-dessus, la différence entre le montant réel ainsi dépensé par le Japon et le montant réel également déboursé par la Russie.

ARTICLE XIV.

Le présent Traité sera ratifié par leurs Majestés l'Empereur de toutes les Russies et l'Empereur du Japon. Cette ratification sera, dans le plus bref délai possible, et en tous cas pas plus tard que dans cinquante jours à partir de la date de la signature du Traité, notifiée aux Gouvernements Impériaux de Russie et du Japon respectivement, par l'intermédiaire de l'Ambassadeur des États-Unis d'Amérique à S[ain]t-Pétersbourg et du Ministre de France à Tokio, et à partir de la date de la dernière de ces notifications ce Traité entrera, dans toutes ses parties, en pleine vigueur.

L'échange formel des ratifications se fera à Washington aussitôt que possible.

ARTICLE XV.

Le présent Traité sera signé en double : en langues Française et Anglaise. Les deux textes sont absolument conformes : mais, en cas de divergence d'interprétation, le texte Français fera foi.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé et scellé de leurs sceaux le présent Traité de Paix.

Fait à Portsmouth (New Hampshire) le vingt-trois Août (cinq Septembre) de l'an mil neuf cent cinq, correspondant au cinquième jour du neuvième mois de la trente huitième année de Meidji.

(signé) IUTARO KOMURA.

(signé) SERGE WITTE.

(signé) K. TAKAHIRA.

(signé) ROSEN.

(L.S.) (L.S.)

(L.S.) L.S.)

Conformément aux dispositions des Articles III et IX du Traité de Paix entre la Russie et le Japon en date de ce jour, les Plénipotentiaires soussignés ont conclu les Articles additionnels suivants :

1. Ad Article III.

Les Gouvernements Impériaux de Russie et du Japon s'engagent mutuellement à commencer le retrait de leurs forces militaires du territoire de la Manchourie simultanément et immédiatement après la mise en vigueur du Traité de Paix ; et dans une période de dix-huit mois à partir de cette date les armées des deux Puissances seront complètement retirées de la Manchourie à l'exception du territoire à bail de la presqu'île de Liaotong.

Les forces des deux Puissances occupant les positions frontales seront retirées les premières.

Les Hautes Parties Contractantes se réservent le droit de maintenir des gardes pour protéger leurs lignes de chemins de fer respectives en Manchourie.

Le nombre de ces gardes n'excèdera pas quinze hommes par kilomètre ; et, dans la limite de ce nombre maximum, les Commandants des armées Russes et Japonaises fixeront, de commun accord, le nombre des gardes qui seront employés, le plus minime possible, conformément aux exigences réelles.

Les Commandants des forces Russes et Japonaises en Manchourie s'entendront sur tous les détails relatifs à l'exécution de l'évacuation conformément aux principes ci-dessus énumérés et prendront, de commun accord, les mesures nécessaires pour effectuer l'évacuation aussitôt que possible et en tout cas pas plus tard que dans la période de dix-huit mois.

2. Ad Article IX.

Aussitôt que possible après la mise en vigueur du présent Traité une Commission de Délimitation, composée de nombre égal de membres qui seront nommés respectivement par les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes, marquera sur les lieux, d'une manière permanente, la ligne exacte entre les possessions Russes et Japonaises de l'Île de Sakhaline. La Commission sera tenue, autant que les considérations topographiques le permettront, à suivre le cinquantième parallèle de latitude nord pour la ligne de démarcation, et dans le cas où des déviations de la dite ligne sur quelques points seront trouvées nécessaires, compensation en sera faite par des déviations corrélatives sur d'autres points. Il sera de même le devoir de la dite Commission de préparer une liste et description des îles adjacentes qui seront comprises dans la cession, et finalement la Commission préparera et signera les cartes constatant les limites du territoire cédé. Les travaux de la Commission seront soumis à l'approbation des Hautes Parties Contractantes.

Les Articles additionnels mentionnés ci-dessus seront considérés comme ratifiés par la ratification du Traité de Paix, auquel ils sont annexés.

Portsmouth, le 23 Août (5 Septembre) 1905, correspondant au 5^{me} jour, 9^{ème} mois, 38^{ème} année de Meidji.

(signé) IUTARO KOMURA.

(signé) SERGE WITTE.

(signé) K. TAKAHIRA.

(signé) ROSEN.

Wherefore, after due perusal of this Treaty and its two Supplementary Articles, We have accepted the same as satisfactory, have confirmed and ratified it, and we also accept it hereby as satisfactory, and confirm and ratify it in all its contents, promising by Our Imperial word, on Our own behalf, and that of Our Heirs and Successors, that everything laid down in the above-mentioned acts will be inviolably observed.

In token whereof, We, having signed with Our own hand this Our Imperial Ratification, have commanded it to be confirmed by Our Imperial Seal.

Given at Peterhof the first [14th] day of October in the year of Our Lord 1905, and in the eleventh year of Our Reign.⁽²⁾

Signed NICHOLAS.

Countersigned

Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Secretary of State,

Count LAMSDORFF.

(2) [The Emperor of Japan also ratified the Treaty on October 14, whereupon the Treaty came into force.]

VI.—NEGOTIATIONS RELATING TO WEI-HAI-WEI AND COREA, 1904-5.

No. 102.

Mr. Jordan to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Seoul, May 19, 1904.

F.O. China 1661.

D. 4.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 107.)

R. 4.15 P.M.

Edict published today cancels all Treaties between Russia and Corea. Special reference is made to timber concession 1896 which from being a private transaction is described as having been converted by Russian Government into an instrument of political aggression by supplementary agreement of July 20, 1903. Latter is also declared null and void.

Japanese Minister informs me confidentially that step was taken on the advice of Japanese Government who regard Korean cooperation as a principle of cardinal importance and consider maintenance of Treaty relations with Russia as incompatible therewith.

(Sent to Tokyo.)

No. 103.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 590.⁽¹⁾

(No. 151.)

Foreign Office, D. September 26, 1905.

Sir,

R. November 14, 1905.

The Japanese Minister called upon me today and informed me that he was instructed to make a communication to me in regard to Corea.

It was to the following effect.

“ Confidential.

“ September 26, 1905.

“ In the external relations of Corea the Imperial Government recognize elements of grave danger still exist. The Court and high officials of Corea have always considered it to be their best policy skilfully to manipulate the influence of Russia and Japan in Corea so as to make them the means of mutual restraint, and it is an undeniable fact that, in pursuing this policy they have not hesitated to enter into unwise treaty and other engagements with foreign Powers. In fact this may be said to have formed one of the direct causes of the recent war between the two Powers.

“ Under the agreement of August 22nd 1904 between Japan and Corea the latter agreed to consult Japan before concluding Treaties with foreign Powers and

(¹) [The copy in this volume is a rough draft, and the text has therefore been checked by the Embassy archives, Japan, F.O. 202/924. The two are identical except for minor differences in capitalisation.]

also before taking any steps regarding important diplomatic affairs.⁽²⁾ In spite of this Agreement and even while the war was still in progress instances have not been lacking where the Korean authorities have disregarded or attempted to disregard the above Treaty stipulation. The Japanese Government have also heard that some influential Koreans are said to be entertaining similar designs at the present time—and this even before peace is definitely established! What, therefore, their course of action will be when peace is restored and the restrictions imposed upon their actions by the conditions of war cease to exist is not difficult to surmise.

"Russia, on the other hand, has recognized in the Treaty of Peace the right of Japan to full liberty of action in Korea. But it is by no means clear what attitude she may be disposed to assume later.

"So long as the relations of Korea with foreign Powers remain as at present the position of Japan in Korea will continue to be an insecure one which is a state of affairs Japan cannot possibly suffer to exist.

"Such being the case Japan may be compelled to take radical steps to eliminate future evils, and in order to accomplish this effectively the Imperial Government have no alternative but to assume the charge of the external relations of the Korean Government. The Imperial Government, therefore, propose to take, ere long, the necessary measures to attain the above object.

"In view of the stipulations which are contained in the new Alliance Agreement the Imperial Government entertain no doubt as to their receiving the full concurrence of His Majesty's Government in this matter. Nevertheless they deem it only right, considering the close relations of the two countries, frankly to state their views on this subject and they hope to anticipate the action they are about to take in Korea by an exchange of views between the two Governments."

I told Viscount Hayashi that, as he was aware, His Majesty's Government were entirely favourable to the development of Japanese influence in Korea and that, so far as they were concerned, the Jap[ane]se Gov[ernmen]t were not likely to encounter any difficulties in giving effect to their policy.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE.]

(2) [The following is the text of the Agreement of August 22, 1904, as communicated by Viscount Hayashi on August 31:—

F.O. Japan 585.

Translation.

August 22, 1904.

I. Korean Government shall engage a Japanese subject recommended by Japanese Government as Financial Adviser to the Korean Government and all matters concerning finance shall be dealt with after his counsel being taken.

II. Korean Government shall engage a foreigner recommended by Japanese Government as Diplomatic Adviser to Foreign Office and all important matters concerning foreign relations shall be dealt with after his counsel being taken.

III. Korean Government shall previously consult Japanese Government in concluding Treaties and Conventions with foreign Powers and in dealing with other important diplomatic affairs such as the grant of concessions to or contracts with foreigners.

Verbal Explanation on Communicated Agreement.

The present agreement is nothing more than the natural consequence or development of the Protocol of February 23, 1904, concluded between Japan and Korea which the Viscount Hayashi communicated to the British Government at that time. The Agreement does not in any way interfere with the full operation or validity of Korea's existing treaties and the Article III of the Agreement is not intended to place any impediment in the way of legitimate enterprise but merely to check the future conclusion of unwise and improvident engagements which in the past have been the sources of trouble and complications.

This agreement was signed at Séoul August 22, v. also Sir C. MacDonald's Tel. No. 242 of August 29, 1904, F.O. Japan 581.]

No. 104.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. China 1767.

Foreign Office, October 13, 1905.

Tel. (No. 133.) Secret.

D. 10 A.M.

Have Japanese Gov[ernmen]t given any indication recently whether they still attach importance to our retention of Wei-hai-wei? If not could you ascertain their views without making them aware that matter is under consideration here?

No. 105.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, October 15, 1905.

F.O. China 1767.

D. 2-20 P.M.

Tel. (No 247.) Secret.

R. 5-30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 133.⁽¹⁾

Japanese Government have given no indication that they have changed view expressed by Baron Komura (my telegram No. 23*) namely, that it was the "earnest wish" of his Government that Great Britain should retain Wei-hai-Wei.

Yesterday I had good opportunity to sound Prime Minister and Minister of Marine privately and separately on this point. They were both strongly of opinion that so long as Germany held Kiao-chow, so long should we remain in Wei-hai-Wei.

They considered transfer of the Liaotung Peninsula to Japan made no difference whatever in our lease of Wei-hai-Wei.

As to whether Japan will try to extend lease of Liaotung beyond the 25 years, the statesmen above mentioned naturally show reserve, but from the way they spoke Japan has undoubtedly come to stay.

I am of opinion that our withdrawal from Wei-hai-Wei would be in opposition to wishes of Japanese Government, and would create the very worst impression throughout Japan.

I venture to think, also, that it would injure our influence and prestige in the Far East generally.

MINUTE.

v. Sir E. Satow's 185 and my minute.⁽²⁾

L.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

* Of Jan[uary] 25. The telegram only contained the statement quoted as to Wei-hai-wei. The rest of the message referred to the conditions of peace.—W. L.

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 106.

Sir E. Satow to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Peking, October 16, 1905.

F.O. China 1767.

D. 12-25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 185.)

R. 1 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 148 (of Oct[ober] 13.)⁽¹⁾ Withdrawal from Wei-hai-wei.

Chinese view would be that we were simply giving up in accordance with stipulation that the lease ends when Russian occupation of Port Arthur terminates.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Representation of the China Association doubtless accords with views of British community, but I regard it as premature to approach Chinese Gov[ernmen]t with proposals for renewal until Japanese terms in regard to transfer of Liaotung peninsula are known to H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t. Reasons were given in my private letters of Aug[ust] 24 and September 21 and more fully in my Desp[atch] of October 5⁽²⁾ which should reach you November 16.

Effect of our withdrawal would be to furnish Germany with an opportunity of claiming it under Art[icle] 5 of her Kiaochow Agreement and would seriously weaken our political position. I do not see what compensatory advantages we could obtain. Territorial zones China would not give, commercial would be shared by all other countries, railway and mining concessions are not obtainable in the present mood of the Chinese Gov[ernmen]t.

At the risk of trespassing outside my own province I venture to add these other considerations.

As a health station for H[is] M[ajesty's] ships during hot season in South China and for training crews in gunnery and torpedo and rifle practice the place is invaluable and cost of civil administration is insignificant. I do not see what we can possibly gain by withdrawal.

MINUTES.

Wei-hai-wei.

1. We have not yet seen any official version of the Treaty of Peace, but we believe that by its terms Japan has to settle with China as to the transfer of the Liao-tung lease.

2. I annex Article V of the Kiao-chau Agreement.* Germany could apparently only claim Wei-hai-wei by retirement from Kiao-chau which is unlikely after the expenditure she has incurred there.

W. L.

* ARTICLE V.

Should Germany at some future time express the wish to return Kiao-chau Bay to China before the expiration of the lease, China engages to refund to Germany the expenditure she has incurred at Kiao-chau, and to cede to Germany a more suitable place.

Germany engages at no time to sublet the territory leased from China to another Power.

The Chinese population dwelling in the ceded territory shall at all times enjoy the protection of the German Government, provided that they behave in conformity with law and order; unless their land is required for other purposes they may remain there.

If land belonging to Chinese owners is required for any other purpose, the owner will receive compensation.

As regards the re-establishment of Chinese customs stations which formerly existed outside the ceded territory but within the 50-kilom. zone, the Imperial German Government intends to come to an agreement with the Chinese Government for the definitive regulation of the customs frontier, and the mode of collecting customs duties, in a manner which will safeguard all the interests of China, and proposes to enter into further negotiations on the subject.

The above agreement shall be ratified by the Sovereigns of both the Contracting States, and the ratifications exchanged in such manner that, after the receipt in Berlin of the Treaty ratified by China, the copy ratified by Germany shall be handed to the Chinese Minister in Berlin.

The foregoing Treaty has been drawn up in four copies, two in German and two in Chinese, and was signed by the Representatives of the two Contracting States on the 6th March, 1898, equal to the 14th day of the second month in the twenty-fourth year Kuanghsu.

(Great Seal of the Tsung-li Yamen.)

The Imperial German Minister,

(Signed)

BARON VON HEYKING.

LI HUNG-CHANG (in Chinese), Imperial Chinese Grand Secretary, Minister of the Tsung-li Yamen, &c., &c.

WENG TUNG-HO (in Chinese), Imperial Chinese Grand Secretary, Member of the Council of State, Minister of the Tsung-li Yamen, &c., &c.

(2) [Not reproduced.]

This expenditure is to be recovered from China if Germany goes but I agree that any such withdrawal is in the highest degree improbable. Sir E. Satow is as emphatic as Sir C. MacDonald in deprecating the abandonment of W.H.W., and from the F[oreign] O[ffice] point of view I think Sir E. Satow correctly sums up by stating that it "would seriously weaken our political position."

We have now the Commercial Community in this country and in China, H[is] M[ajesty's] Ministers at Peking and Tokio, the Japanese Gov[ernment] and the Col[onial] Office all dead against withdrawal.

F. A. C.
Oct. 16, 05.

This telegram is conclusive as to the view of,

1. The British community,
2. Sir E. Satow himself,

and Sir C. MacDonald leaves us in no doubt as to the opinion of

3. The Japanese Gov[ernment] and
4. His own.

I understood from the Prime Minister that he would bring the question before the defence committee at its first meeting.

The Admiralty are apparently in favour of withdrawal, but whatever may be said upon strategical grounds, the political arguments are entitled to much weight.

If however we remain we shall have to regularize our position and obtain an extension.

I attach no importance to the argument that if we retired from W[ei]-h[ai]-W[ei] the Germans might come in.

L.
20/10.

[ED. NOTE.—In reply to a question in the House of Commons on February 22, 1906, Mr. Runciman stated "It is not considered that the transfer of the Russian lease of Port Arthur has made any change in the present *status* of Wei-hai-Wei, which is leased to His Majesty's Government, and no action is at present contemplated with regard to the lease." (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 152, p. 505.) Some further *pourparlers* both with Japan and with China took place during the latter half of 1906. A Memorandum from the War Office of November 3 expressed the view that the military value of Wei-hai-Wei was considerable, and Sir Edward Grey upheld this view in negotiation.]

No. 107.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. China 1767.

(No. 266.) Confidential.

Tôkiô, D. November 6, 1905.

My Lord,

R. December 27, 1905.

His Excellency Baron Komura, Minister for Foreign Affairs called upon me officially this afternoon. He explained this departure from diplomatic etiquette by saying he could not receive me at his residence, because, owing to his almost immediate departure for China on a special mission, he would be inundated with callers, and he wanted to speak to me privately and without interruption on one or two subjects.

His Excellency commenced by expressing his great satisfaction and that of the Japanese Government at the King's desire to raise this Legation to an Embassy. This, he said, had given the utmost satisfaction to His Majesty The Emperor. He spoke also of my probable appointment as Ambassador here, and then proceeded to tell me about his approaching mission to China. His Excellency said that he was taking with him Mr. Denison and practically the same staff he had with him in America; the object of his mission, which was practically a continuation of the Portsmouth mission, was to arrange with the Chinese Government the transfer of the lease of the Liaotung Peninsula and of the railway from Changchung to Port Arthur as laid down in Articles V and VI of the Treaty of Peace.

His first care would be to arrange with the Chinese Government the opening of certain places in Manchuria for trade and commerce. His Excellency reminded me that shortly before the war the Japanese Government in conjunction with the United States Government wished to open Harbin, Antung and a port* near the mouth of the Yalu to trade. The Chinese Government were willing, but owing to the opposition of the Russian Government who objected to the opening of Treaty ports in Manchuria within what they called their sphere of interest, the matter dropped.

Your Lordship will remember that the American Government appointed Consuls to these places, but these Consuls did not, on account apparently of objections raised by the Russian Government, proceed.

During the Portsmouth negotiations, His Excellency said he had pressed Monsieur de Witte hard, and had insisted that these ports, whether within or without the Railway zone, should be opened, even going the length of threatening to break off the negotiations if this point was not ceded. At last Monsieur de Witte yielded and gave a verbal promise that no opposition from the Russian Government would take place, and the promise was entered in the *procès-verbal*.

The establishment of a Treaty Port, owing to its international character, in any province or part of China is undoubtedly a great bar to that part of China becoming absorbed or annexed by another Power. The strong objection which Russia had, and which apparently she still has to this establishment in Manchuria is, I venture to think, significant.

Baron Komura said that he intended to try and settle this question of the establishment of these Treaty Ports in Manchuria first, so as to get it definitely arranged "Before the Russian Government had time to change their minds or Monsieur de Witte to forget his promise."

I asked whether His Excellency anticipated any difficulty with the Chinese Government in the matter of the transfer of the lease of the Liaotung peninsula. Baron Komura said he did not, considering that the whole of Manchuria with the exception of the leased portions was, thanks to the efforts of the Japanese, to be handed back to China; and that this rendition of Manchuria meant the release of the whole of North China which up till then was slowly but surely being absorbed by Russia, the Chinese would be ungrateful indeed if they made any objections to the provisions of Articles V and VI of the Treaty.

I asked whether the Japanese Government would be content with the remainder of the unexpired lease of 25 years which the Russians had obtained in 1898. I hardly expected to draw an expression of opinion from His Excellency on this point, but he answered at once and with frankness that his instructions were not to raise the question of the duration of the lease. If the Chinese raised the point he was to decline to discuss it. His own personal opinion was strongly in favour of the above course, later on when the lease was about to expire he thought the Japanese Government should insist upon holding Port Arthur at any rate for as long as the Germans remained at Kiao-chau. "This," His Excellency added with a smile, "we could do by virtue of the most favoured nation clause in our treaty with China."⁽¹⁾

His Excellency then touched on the British occupation of Wei-Hai-Wei and said that not only had the Japanese Government no objection to our remaining in possession, but they earnestly hoped we would. It was most important that this naval port should remain in possession of a strong and friendly Power, at any rate as long as any of the leases which China had given to other Powers remained in force—he added, "I beg that you will telegraph this to your Government."

His Excellency then spoke about railway guards on the Manchurian railway line. The number of these, as Your Lordship is aware, is fixed by the Protocol of the Treaty at 15 per kilometre. These guards, Baron Komura said, would be dispensed with, so far as the part of the Railway under Japanese control was concerned, the

* Tatungkow.

(1) [Unsigned marginal comment: "A very odd reading of Art. X of the Treaty."]

moment it was seen that China was capable of looking after the Railway herself. During the peace negotiations Monsieur de Witte had contended for 20 men per Kilometre, Baron Komura for 5, ultimately the present number was decided upon.

His Excellency said that he thought his mission would last upwards of a month. During his absence Count Katsura would, as before act as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MacDONALD.

P.S.—Baron Komura also said that he hoped in the matter of the lease of Wei-hai-wei His Majesty's Government would adopt the same attitude which the Japanese Gov[ernmen]t intended to take regarding the lease of Port Arthur.

C. M. MacD.

MINUTE.

The conclusive argument for the retention of Wei Hai Wei for the present appears to me to be the strong feeling of the Japanese. The last expression of this feeling in Sir C. MacDonald's No. 266, should be added to the paper already prepared.

E. G.

[Jan. 1, 1906.]

No. 108.

Sir E. Satow to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Peking, November 21, 1905.

F.O. China 1675.

Tel. (No. 217.)

D. 12.35 P.M.

R. Noon.

Corea.

Japanese Ambassador states that a treaty was signed on October 18 [sic] by Korean Minister for Foreign Affairs and Japanese Minister by which Corea agrees to receive Japanese protectorate, and to leave conduct of foreign affairs in the hands of the Japanese Government. Consequently the maintenance of the Foreign legations will become unnecessary.

No. 109.

Communication by Viscount Hayashi, November 22, 1905.

Agreement between Japan and Corea.

F.O. Japan 600.

November 17, 1905.

The Governments of Japan and Corea desiring to strengthen the principle of solidarity which unites the two Empires have, with that object in view, agreed upon and concluded the following stipulations to serve until the moment arrives when it is recognized that Corea has attained national strength:

ARTICLE I.

The Government of Japan, through the Department of Foreign Affairs in Tokio, will, hereafter, have control and direction of the external relations and affairs of Corea and the diplomatic and consular representatives of Japan will have the charge of the subjects and interests of Corea in Foreign countries.

ARTICLE II.

The Government of Japan undertake to see to the execution of the treaties actually existing between Corea and other Powers and the Government of Corea engage not to conclude hereafter any act or engagement having an international character, except through the medium of the Government of Japan.

ARTICLE III.

The Government of Japan shall be represented at the Court of His Majesty the Emperor of Corea by Resident-General, who shall reside at Seoul primarily for the purpose of taking charge of and directing matters relating to diplomatic affairs.

He shall have the right of private and personal audience of His Majesty the Emperor of Corea.

The Japanese Government shall also have the right to station residents at the several open ports and such other places in Corea as they may deem necessary. Such Residents shall, under the direction of the Resident-General designate the powers and functions hitherto appertaining to Japanese Consuls in Corea and shall perform such duties as may be necessary in order to carry into full effect the provisions of this agreement.

ARTICLE IV.

The stipulations of all treaties and agreement[s] existing between Japan and Corea not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement shall continue in force.

ARTICLE V.

The Government of Japan undertake to maintain the welfare and dignity of the Imperial House of Corea.

In faith whereof the undersigned duly authorized by their Governments have signed this Agreement and affixed their seals.

November 17th.

HAYASHI GONSUKE,
*Envoy Extraordinary and Minister
Plenipotentiary.*

PAK CHE SOON,
Minister for Foreign Affairs.

November 17, 1905.

In confidentially communicating to your Lordship the accompanying Agreement between Japan and Corea I am instructed by Count Katsura to inform you of the intention of the Imperial Government to officially communicate the present Agreement in due time to His Majesty's and other Governments. I am also to add that the perilous situation in Corea has rendered necessary the conclusion of this compact but that the Treaties existing between the Powers and Corea will be respected by the Imperial Government and that the Imperial Government intends shortly to make a declaration to the effect that all proper commercial and industrial interests enjoyed by the Powers in Corea will in no way be injured.

Pending such official communication and declaration, however, the Imperial Government have deemed it right to make known confidentially to His Majesty's Government the present Agreement and hope that His Majesty's Government will regard the communication as confidential for the present.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE AGREEMENT OF 1905.

No. 110.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, February 13, 1905.

F.O. Japan 595.

D. 3.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 36.) Very Confidential.

R. 3.45 P.M.

Yesterday evening I spoke to the Prime Minister on the subject of Sir C. Hardinge's despatch No. 651 of Dec[ember] 2 to Your Lordship relative to the possibility of an understanding between Japan and Russia after the war with a view to eventually isolate Great Britain in the Far East.⁽¹⁾ Prime Minister begged me to telegraph to Your Lordship and state in the most categorical manner that such an arrangement was altogether impossible and would not be considered for a moment by the Japanese Government. He added that Japan was entirely satisfied and would remain true to the alliance which had been of the greatest assistance to her in her hour of need in that it had enabled her to carry on the war wholeheartedly and without fear of being attacked from an unexpected quarter.

His Excellency repeated and emphasized his declaration made to me on December 23 to the effect that Japan was entirely satisfied with the extremely satisfactory manner in which England had carried out her obligations as ally.

My telegram No. 324 (of December 24, 1904).⁽²⁾

MINUTES.

This is the second message of the kind we have received. For first see his telegram No. 324. Should not Sir C. MacDonald be instructed to make some reply to the effect that it has been received with much pleasure and satisfaction?

F. A. C.
18/2.

Yes, so inform him.⁽³⁾

L.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 66-7, No. 58, and note (2).]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. The tenour is indicated above.]

⁽³⁾ [A telegram giving instructions to this effect was sent as Tel. No. 11 of February 14.]

No. 111.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 51A.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 24, 1905.

I had an interesting conversation this afternoon with the Japanese Minister, who called upon me at my invitation, upon the subject of the possibility of a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. I told Viscount Hayashi that I had read with the utmost interest your confidential despatch No. 39 of the 15th of February,⁽¹⁾ in which you had given me a graphic description of the dinner given on the 12th of February by

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced as the tenour is indicated.]

the Foreign Minister in honour of the completion of the third year of the alliance. I had noticed with much satisfaction the terms in which Baron Komura had proposed the health of His Majesty The King and his hope that the alliance would continue to grow in strength and solidity. I said that you had also reported to me the Foreign Minister's observation that he wished that the alliance might be extended for a further and longer period, and that its provisions might be given a larger and wider scope. Although I could not regard these statements as equivalent to an official overture, they seemed to justify me in inviting some expression of Viscount Hayashi's opinion as to the probable policy and intentions of the Japanese Government. I also referred to the extracts published in the "Times" of the 22nd instant from several of the most important Japanese newspapers, all of which apparently advocated a continuation, if not an extension, of the alliance. I added that, hoping as I did that the Japanese Government might before long find itself in a position to consider what terms of peace it could accept, I thought it might be of advantage to them in determining their policy to be made aware of the views of His Majesty's Government upon this important subject.

Viscount Hayashi told me that the Foreign Minister's observations correctly represented the general feeling in Japan, which, he said, had been appropriately expressed by the newspapers all of them important exponents of Japanese public opinion, which the "Times" had quoted. He therefore personally felt no doubt that a renewal of the existing alliance would be desired by the Japanese Government.

I replied that, although it was perhaps unusual to anticipate the moment when the question of a renewal would inevitably arise, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would I felt almost sure in the exceptional circumstances of the present case entertain favourably the idea of continuing the alliance for another term of years. It would however be useful to me to know what was in the mind of the Japanese Government, and what was meant by the Japanese press when it was suggested that the alliance might be given a larger and wider scope.

Viscount Hayashi said that, in his opinion, this desire was at the present mainly a matter of sentiment, although there was undoubtedly a general feeling in favour of making the alliance "more solid." The Japanese Government had however of late been far too fully occupied with the war to permit them to think out the difficult problems involved in such a proposal. Some eminent Japanese soldiers, he added, were much in favour of an arrangement under which, in return for adequate concessions on our side, Japanese troops might be employed in India. The feeling in Japan was strongly British, and there was no question at all of a *rapprochement* with Russia, although such a thing might some day happen if a different system of government were to be introduced in that country. He thought therefore that the present Government, which might perhaps not remain in office long after the termination of the war, would probably be glad to take up the question of extending the scope of the alliance. He would however at once report to the Japanese Government that the subject had been informally discussed between us, and would let me know how it was regarded by them. Was there, he asked, any chance that the United States Government would join us? No combination could be more important, or more popular in Japan. I said that I had had frequent discussions with the United States Government with regard to affairs in the Far East, and that I had good reasons for knowing that their policy was eminently friendly to Japan, and I thought I might say identical with ours. There was therefore every reason for anticipating that American influence would be exerted upon the same lines as ours. The United States Government were however notoriously opposed to the idea of entangling themselves in foreign alliances, and although I should expect to find them moving upon parallel lines with us, I doubted whether they were likely to do more.

Viscount Hayashi told me, at the close of our conversation, that he had learned from a confidential source that President Roosevelt had sounded the French Minister at Washington as to the probability of the terms of peace which had been mentioned by the Japanese Government being accepted by Russia. The French Minister had brought

an answer to the effect that as Russia had over four hundred thousand men at Mukden and a powerful fleet at sea, there could be no question of discussing terms of peace.

Viscount Hayashi thought that the rumour that the President had been invited by Japan to mediate must have had its origin in these communications.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 112.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 73.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 19, 1905.

The Japanese Minister informed me this afternoon that he had received instructions to lay before me the views of the Japanese Government upon the suggestion which I had made to him on the 24th ultimo—see my despatch No. 54 of the 29th ult[imo].⁽²⁾

The Japanese Government appreciated very highly the advantages which they had derived from the Anglo-Japanese Agreement during the war which was proceeding, and they believed that such an alliance would be even more important to Japan in the future. They would therefore be glad to renew it, and they considered that a longer period might be fixed for its duration. They suggested seven years from the present date.

On the other hand, they would prefer that the scope of the Alliance should not be extended beyond its present limits.

Finally, Viscount Hayashi was instructed to say that, in the opinion of the Japanese Government, the sooner we came to an agreement as to the renewal of the Treaty the better.

I promised Viscount Hayashi that I would lose no time in making my colleagues aware of the substance of his communication.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [The substance of this was conveyed on April 21 in Tel. No. 39 to Sir C. MacDonald.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to the acknowledgement, made by Viscount Hayashi on behalf of the Japanese Government, of the British suggestion for the renewal of the alliance.]

No. 113.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 679.

(No. 80.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 3, 1905.

I had some conversation with the Japanese Minister to-day upon the subject of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. I told Viscount Hayashi that his communication upon this subject had reached me just as the Easter holidays were commencing, and I had not consequently had an opportunity of conferring with my

colleagues until this morning. The matter was one which, in their opinion, required the most careful examination, and I was not yet able to supply him with a statement of our views. It had given them great pleasure to learn that the value of the Alliance was so thoroughly appreciated by the Japanese Government, and he might rely upon the friendly spirit in which the question would be examined. It was however obvious that a renewal of the Agreement for a much extended period of years so long before the expiration of the first term was a somewhat serious step, and one which it would be necessary to examine in all its bearings.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 114.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.
(No. 83.) Secret.
Sir,

Foreign Office, May 10, 1905.

Viscount Hayashi asked me to-day whether I was able to say anything to him on the subject of the suggested renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. He brought with him a draft, of which a copy is attached to this despatch, of the form of Agreement which the Japanese Government would be glad to accept. I told Viscount Hayashi that the question was still under the consideration of His Majesty's Government, and that I was not yet able to make any statement with regard to it. He replied that, in the opinion of the Japanese Government, the earlier the matter was arranged the better, as the renewal of the Agreement "would serve as an indication to other Powers of the course of action" which Japan was likely to pursue.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSDOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Enclosure in No. 114.

Draft of Agreement.

The Government[s] of Japan and Great Britain convinced that the Agreement concluded in London between their respective representatives on the 30th of January, 1902 has contributed in the past to the general interests, believing that the said Agreement if renewed in like manner would prove generally beneficial in the future and taking note of the measures which Japan finds it necessary to take in Corea to safeguard her special political interest there have agreed as follows:—

Article I. The High Contracting Parties hereby agreed to renew and prolong the above mentioned Agreement of the 30th day of January 1902 for the period of seven years from the date hereof.

Article II. Same as Article VI of the present Agreement with the necessary changes.⁽¹⁾

(Article VI of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement of January 30, 1902, runs as follows:—

“The present Agreement shall come into effect immediately after the date of its signature, and remain in force for five years from that date.

⁽¹⁾ [Viscount Hayashi's draft ended here. The section in brackets, which follows, was added in the Foreign Office.]

"In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified two months before the expiration of the said five years the intention of terminating it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. But if, when the date fixed for its expiration arrives, either ally is actually engaged in war, the alliance shall, *ipso facto*, continue until peace is concluded.")

No. 115.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 678.

(No. 88.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 17, 1905.

The Japanese Minister called upon me to-day. I told him that I had mentioned to the Cabinet the desire which the Japanese Government had expressed for an early decision with regard to the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. I was able to tell him that my colleagues were in principle entirely in favour of renewing the Agreement. We had however come to the conclusion, after a very careful examination of the case, that there would be considerable advantage in coupling the renewal of the Treaty with an amplification of its scope. It would, in the first place, be easier for us to justify a premature renewal if we were able to show that we renewed the Treaty now in order to have an opportunity of modifying its terms. Besides this, we could not help thinking that it would be to the advantage of both parties to revise the conditions and to strengthen them at certain points. I could assure His Excellency that our proposal was not dilatory, and I suggested that he should ascertain at once by telegram from the Japanese Government whether they were favourably disposed towards it, and, if so, upon what conditions. We would in the meantime further examine the question, and be ready with proposals on our side.

Viscount Hayashi asked me whether I could give him any idea as to the manner in which the Agreement might be strengthened. I said that I had no authority to express the views of His Majesty's Government, but that it seemed to me obvious that there were two directions in which the Agreement might be amplified. The parties might undertake to assist one another in the event of either of them being unprovokedly attacked, whether a third Power had previously interfered or not, and it might be provided that in return for the promise that Great Britain would place the whole of her naval resources at the disposal of Japan, in the event of Japan being attacked by a single Power, Japan might on her side undertake to assist Great Britain, by land as well as by sea, within certain geographical limits. The problem, as it presented itself to me, was somewhat of the following character. Assuming Japan to be completely successful in the war, Russia would certainly make it her object, as soon as she had recovered from the shock, to renew her attack upon Japan in such strength as to crush her completely out of existence. If Russia were to adopt such a policy, I did not see how any exertions on the part of Japan would enable her to maintain so unequal a struggle. The attempt would be ruinous to her, and could, I feared, only end one way. This risk would be completely removed by an alliance with Great Britain of such a kind as to make it certain that Russia would have to reckon with the combined Fleets of that Power and Japan. With such a prospect before her, Russia would in all probability abandon the idea of reprisals in the Far East. If however she were to find herself thus precluded from realising her hopes of revenge, she would almost certainly turn her attention to other parts of the Asiatic continent, with the result that Great Britain would be more seriously threatened than at present upon the Indian frontier and at other points. In such circumstances it was not unnatural that we should look for some compensating advantage in return for the additional liability which we should, in the case supposed, have undertaken.

His Excellency listened with great attention to what I had said, and did not contest my argument. He told me however that he felt almost sure that public opinion in Japan had not yet entertained the idea of extending the alliance in such a manner as to create a *casus fœderis*, even where one of the parties was attacked by a single Power instead of by a combination. As to the question of geographical limits, he felt sure that the Japanese Government did not contemplate an alliance which would impose upon them obligations beyond the limits of the Far East. I asked Viscount Hayashi what the Far East included, and he made it clear that India, in his opinion, formed no part of that region.

I explained to him that the latter part of my observations were purely personal, and represented my own opinions only. He told me that he would communicate the substance of what I had said at the beginning of our conversation at once to the Japanese Government.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 116.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, May 25, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 124.) Most Secret.

D. 1 P.M.

R. 2 P.M.

Your telegram No. 53 of (May 18).⁽¹⁾

Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

At councils held May 23 and 24 at which the Elder Statesmen, all Cabinet Ministers and the chiefs of the General Staffs of the Army and Navy were present, it was decided to accept in principle the revised terms and enlarged scope suggested by your Lordship.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is now drawing up the instructions to the Japanese representative at London respecting the details of what will be practically a new Alliance; these details will be laid before your Lordship in the course of a few days. I understand that they follow closely the lines suggested in your telegram above mentioned,—England and Japan to assist one another in the event of either of them being unprovokedly attacked by a third power; the geographical limits to be the Far East and East Asia including India. Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that the decision was arrived at without one dissentient voice, the idea being that such an alliance would render war in the East practically impossible at any rate for many generations to come. As to the military and naval details these would be worked out later by the technical advisers of the two governments.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It gave the substance of Lord Lansdowne's conversation with Viscount Hayashi, reported at greater length in the despatch of May 17, v. immediately preceding document.]

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 679.

(No. 143.) Most Secret.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. May 25, 1905.

R. July 3, 1905.

On the 19th instant I received Your Lordship's telegram informing me of your interview on the previous day with the Japanese Minister, Viscount Hayashi.⁽¹⁾ on which occasion you informed His Excellency that His Majesty's Government were, in principle, in favour of renewing the Anglo-Japanese agreement, but, in order to justify its premature renewal, it would be advisable to revise its terms and enlarge its scope.

In reply to a question from the Japanese Minister, Your Lordship stated that the agreement might be amplified in two directions:—the High Contracting Parties might enter into an undertaking to assist one another if either of them were unprovokedly attacked, whether a third Power had interfered or not; in return for such an engagement on the part of Great Britain, Japan might undertake to assist her, by land as well as by sea, within certain geographic limits.

In reply to this, the Japanese Minister informed Your Lordship that he did not think that his Government had entertained the idea of extending the Alliance to the case of attack by one Power only, and added that he was quite sure that they did not contemplate an Alliance which would impose upon them obligations beyond the limits of the Far East, making it clear that India was not included within those limits.

On May 5, I telegraphed to Your Lordship,⁽²⁾ stating that Baron Komura had spoken to me several times with regard to the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese agreement for a further term of years, and I added that I thought, from hints which His Excellency had let drop, that he, personally, at any rate, was in favour of a wider scope being given to the alliance: his observations were, however, very guarded, and I could see no indications, in speaking with other influential Japanese, that there was any possibility of extending the scope of the alliance so as to include India. Indeed, the general tone was entirely in accord with the observations of Viscount Hayashi to Your Lordship, which I have quoted above.

The 22nd instant had been fixed for the annual dinner of the Japan Society, at which I was to officiate as chairman. I knew that both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs would be present on that occasion, and I thought it not improbable that they might mention the matter of the extension of the alliance during the course of the evening.

My immediately preceding despatch⁽³⁾ contains a full account of the dinner, together with the speeches made on that occasion. The latter are, as Your Lordship will observe, practically a strong demonstration in favour of the Anglo-Japanese agreement. The Prime Minister, who was seated on my right during the course of the evening asked whether I had heard from Your Lordship respecting the wider scope which it had been suggested should be given to the Anglo-Japanese agreement. I said that I had been kept fully informed on this point. His Excellency then said that a Council was to be held on the following day, at which the Elder Statesmen were to be present, when Your Lordship's suggestions would be considered,—adding that so far as "his" Cabinet was concerned, they were entirely in favour of these suggestions, and he thought he could answer for Field-Marshal Yamagata. As Your Lordship is aware, Marquis Yamagata is Chief of the General Staff, in other words chief of the army, and is certainly the most respected and one of the most powerful of the Elder Statesmen.

Count Katsura begged that I would keep the matter a profound secret, and thought that, as a definite decision would be arrived at on the following day, it would be advisable to wait until then before I telegraphed to my Government.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 124–5, No. 115, and p. 125, No. 116, *note* (1).]

⁽²⁾ [Tel. No. 105 of May 5, D. 10.40 A.M., R. 8.30 P.M.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Later on, Baron Komura, who was seated on my left, also asked me whether Your Lordship had telegraphed to me with regard to a conversation, which you had held with Viscount Hayashi, respecting the renewal of the alliance on a wider basis. I replied in the affirmative. He then said, "I hope, in telegraphing to your Government, you have not committed yourself with regard to Lord Lansdowne's suggestions, because they may not be received by us in the manner you anticipate." I replied that, as Your Lordship had not asked my opinion with regard to the suggestions, I had not given it, but that the Prime Minister had just told me that, so far as the Cabinet were concerned, the suggestions were approved. Baron Komura then became more communicative, and said that the suggestions were tantamount to a new agreement, because the "basic principle had been entirely altered"; the Cabinet being of opinion that the new principle of one of the contracting parties coming to the assistance of the other, if the latter were attacked by one or more powers, was such as to ensure peace in the East for an indefinite period, it had therefore been unanimously accepted.

His Excellency said that he could inform me immediately a decision was definitely arrived at, which could not be done until the Elder Statesmen had been consulted.

The Council took place at the residence of the Prime Minister on the following day (Tuesday), and again on Wednesday, lasting the whole of the latter day. I saw Baron Komura on Thursday morning, when he said that he was glad to inform me that Your Lordship's suggestions had been entirely approved of, and he had received instructions to draw up the proposals of the Japanese Government based on these suggestions, and to send them to Viscount Hayashi to be communicated to Your Lordship. He mentioned that the proposal to form a new alliance—for the old agreement would, of course, lapse—based on Your Lordship's suggestions was carried without a single dissentient voice, Marquis Ito being one of the firmest supporters of the proposal.

As it also received the unqualified approval of Marquis Yamagata and the War Minister, General Terauchi, he supposed that the military authorities had carefully thought out the proposal from a military point of view. Speaking personally, he thought that in case of an attack by Russia on India, Japanese troops operating with ours in India, and also through Manchuria, would be most efficacious. As to the geographical scope of the Alliance, the Far East and East Asia, including of course India, had been decided upon. I observed that in Persia also the Russian Government might be expected to "display activity," to which Baron Komura replied that it was not proposed to include Persia in the geographical scope—only India and all to the East of it. I remarked that very possibly His Majesty's Government would raise this point.

Baron Komura gave me no particular indications as to the precise nature of the proposals which he was formulating, but he mentioned that the integrity of China, the freedom of commerce, and the open-door policy in the Far East was a principle which the new alliance would aim at upholding.

I must confess to considerable surprise at the alacrity and unanimity with which the Japanese Government have taken what I venture to think is a most momentous step. There have been no indications whatever in the Press, nor in the utterances of their responsible men, that would lead one to think that they contemplated doing anything of the kind. Everything pointed to the fact that, even if they consented to stand by us in India, which was very doubtful, they would exact a very sufficient *quid pro quo*. Of course, it is possible that when Baron Komura's proposals are put forward, this may be found to be the case. It may be argued that the fact that we will come to the assistance of Japan, in case the Russians, after this war, embark upon a war of revenge, is a sufficient *quid pro quo*; but the Japanese are well aware that if the Russians are badly beaten in this war, their next venture is much more likely to be an attack upon us through India than an attempt to wipe out old scores with them. I venture to think that one of the main reasons for Japan's willingness to enter into this new alliance is that given by Baron Komura, namely that such an alliance will render war practically impossible. Another reason, which would account for the

alacrity with which they have accepted the new proposals is that, should the great naval action now impending go against them, our moral obligations to stand by them, in case of ultimate defeat, are stronger now than previous to the making and acceptance of these proposals.

In speaking of the unanimity and alacrity of the Japanese Government, it must be remembered that when the Elder Statesmen are in agreement with the Government, it means that the nation will follow as one man. No opposition need, therefore, be feared in Japan to the proposals which Baron Komura will put before Your Lordship.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MacDONALD.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On May 26 Viscount Hayashi called at the Foreign Office and communicated to Lord Lansdowne a draft of the proposed Treaty. Copies were sent by Lord Lansdowne's instruction to the War Office, Admiralty, and to Sir G. Clarke, and the text was printed on May 27 for the use of the Cabinet. It was reprinted on May 29, in parallel columns with the Treaty of January 30, 1902, as is shown below. The text was slightly modified in some points. In this form it was circulated to members of the Cabinet for their observations. The text given in the right hand column below is that of May 29: the original wording of Viscount Hayashi's draft is shown in the footnote.]

No. 118.

Agreement between the United Kingdom and Japan relative to China and Corea.

Draft Heads of Agreement founded on communication made by Viscount Hayashi, May 26, 1905.⁽¹⁾

(Signed at London, January 30, 1902.)

ARTICLE I.

THE Governments of Great Britain and Japan, actuated solely by a desire to maintain the *status quo* and general peace

THE objects of the present alliance are the consolidation and maintenance of general peace in the East, the conservation of the common interests of all the Powers in China, that is to say, the independence and territorial integrity of China and

⁽¹⁾ [F.O. Japan 678. The actual text of Viscount Hayashi's draft was as follows:—

ARTICLE I.

The objects of the alliance are consolidation and maintenance of general peace in the Orient, conservation of common interests of all Powers in China, that is to say, "territorial integrity of China and the open door policy therein," and the protection of respective territorial rights and special interests of the Contracting Parties in East Asia and India.

ARTICLE II.

If either Contracting Party should be wantonly attacked by any other Power or Powers, or should, owing to aggressive action of any other Power or Powers, become involved in war in defence of its menaced rights or interests as above defined, other Contracting Party will at once come to its assistance and will conduct war in common and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

ARTICLE III.

Obligation of one Contracting Party to come to the assistance of other as above described is territorially limited to regions of Eastern Asia and India and no obligation in that respect shall arise unless and until hostilities or warlike operations have taken place in the said regions.

ARTICLE IV.

Right of Japan to take such measures as she may deem right and necessary in order to safeguard her special political, military and economical interests in Corea is fully recognized by Great Britain.

in the extreme East, being, moreover, specially interested in maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the Empire of Corea, and in securing equal opportunities in those countries for the commerce and industry of all nations, hereby agree as follows:—

ARTICLE I.

The High Contracting Parties having mutually recognized the independence of China and of Corea, declare themselves to be entirely uninfluenced by any aggressive tendencies in either country. Having in view, however, their special interests, of which those of Great Britain relate principally to China, while Japan, in addition to the interests which she possesses in China, is interested in a peculiar degree politically as well as commercially and industrially in Corea, the High Contracting Parties recognize that it will be admissible for either of them to take such measures as may be indispensable in order to safeguard those interests if threatened either by the aggressive action of any other Power, or by disturbances arising in China or Corea, and necessitating the intervention of either of the High Contracting Parties for the protection of the lives and property of its subjects.

equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in that country, and the protection of the respective territorial rights and special interests of the Contracting Parties in Eastern Asia and India.

ARTICLE II.

If either Contracting Party should be wantonly attacked by any other Power or Powers, or should, owing to aggressive action of any other Power or Powers, become involved in war in defence of its menaced rights or interests as above stated, [the] other Contracting Party will at once come to its assistance, will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

ARTICLE III.

The obligation of either Contracting Party to come to the assistance of the other as above described is territorially limited to regions of Eastern Asia and India, and no obligation in that respect shall arise unless and until hostilities or warlike operations have taken place in the said regions.

ARTICLE IV.

The right of Japan to take such measures as she may deem right and necessary in

ARTICLE V.

The Agreement to remain in force for ten years from the date of signature.

ARTICLE VI.

As regards the present war between Japan and Russia, England will maintain strict neutrality unless some other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against Japan in which case England will come to the assistance of Japan and conduct war in common and make peace in mutual agreement with Japan.

Separate Articles (Secret).

ARTICLE I.

Each of the Contracting Parties will endeavour to maintain at all times in the Far East a naval force superior in strength to that of any third Power having the largest naval force in the Far East.

ARTICLE II.

Nature and degree of armed assistance and the means by which such assistance is to be made available will be arranged by the naval and military authorities of the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE III.

In case Japan finds it necessary to establish protectorate over Corea in order to check aggressive action of any third Power and to prevent complications in connection with foreign relations of Corea, Great Britain engages to support the action of Japan.

The use of italics indicates substantial identity of wording with the final text of the Treaty. Exact identity is impossible owing to the existence of numerous minor variations.]

ARTICLE II.

If either Great Britain or Japan, in the defence of their respective interests as above described, should become involved in war with another Power, the other High Contracting Party will maintain a strict neutrality, and use its efforts to prevent other Powers from joining in hostilities against its ally.

ARTICLE III.

If, in the above event, any other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against that ally, the other High Contracting Party will come to its assistance, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

ARTICLE IV.

The High Contracting Parties agree that neither of them will, without consulting the other, enter into separate arrangements with another Power to the prejudice of the interests above described.

ARTICLE V.

Whenever, in the opinion of either Great Britain or Japan, the above-mentioned interests are in jeopardy, the two Governments will communicate with one another fully and frankly.

ARTICLE VI.

The present Agreement shall come into effect immediately after the date of its signature, and remain in force for five years from that date.

In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said five years the intention of terminating it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. But if, when the date fixed for its expiration arrives, either ally is actually engaged in war, the alliance shall, *ipso facto*, continue until peace is concluded.

In faith whereof the Undersigned, duly authorized by their respective Govern-

order to safeguard her special political, military, and economical interests in Corea, is fully recognized by Great Britain.

ARTICLE V.

The present Agreement shall come into effect immediately after the date of the signature, and remain in force for ten years from that date.

ARTICLE VI.

As regards the present war between Japan and Russia, Great Britain will maintain strict neutrality, unless some other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against Japan, in which case England will come to the assistance of Japan and conduct war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with Japan.

ments, have signed this Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in duplicate at London, the 30th day of January, 1902.

(L.S.) (Signed) LANSDOWNE,
*His Britannic Majesty's Principal
Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs.*

(L.S.) (Signed) HAYASHI,
*Envoy Extraordinary and Minister
Plenipotentiary of His Majesty
the Emperor of Japan at the Court
of St. James'.*

*Notes exchanged between the two Govern-
ments, January 30, 1902.*

Sir,
M. le Marquis,

IN reference to the Agreement con-
cluded by us to-day on behalf of our
respective Governments, I have the honour
to inform you that the British Govern-
ment recognizes that the naval forces of
Great Britain should, so far as possible,
Japan

act in concert with those of Japan
Great Britain
in time of peace, and agrees that mutual
facilities shall be given for the docking
and coaling of vessels of war of one
country in the ports of the other, as well
as other advantages conducing to the
welfare and efficacy of the respective
navies of the two Powers.

At the present moment Japan and
Great Britain are each of them main-
taining in the Extreme East a naval force
superior in strength to that of any third
Power.

Great Britain has no intention of
Japan
relaxing her efforts to maintain, so far as
may be possible, available for concentra-
tion in the waters of the extreme East, a
naval force superior to that of any third
Power.

*Draft Separate Articles (Secret).—Founded
on communication made by Viscount
Hayashi, May 26, 1905.*

ARTICLE I.

Each of the Contracting Parties will
endeavour to maintain at all times in the
Far East a naval force superior in strength
to that of any third Power having the
largest naval force in the Far East.

ARTICLE II.

[The] nature and degree of [the] armed
assistance, and the means by which such
assistance is to be made available, will be
arranged by the naval and military
authorities of the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE III.

In case Japan finds it necessary to es-
tablish [a] protectorate over Corea in order
to check [the] aggressive action of any third
Power, and to prevent complications in
connection with [the] foreign relations of
Corea, Great Britain engages to support
the action of Japan.

No. 119.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 678.

Foreign Office, May 27, 1905.

Tel. (No. 59.) Most Secret.

D. 5.5 10.M.Your telegram No. 124 (of May 25. Anglo-Japanese Alliance).⁽¹⁾

Inform the Japanese Government that H[is] M[ajesty's] Government highly appreciate the spirit in which their suggestion has been met.

The Japanese Minister communicated to me yesterday the draft of the new Treaty which the Japanese Government are prepared to conclude. They will no doubt give you a copy at your request.

You may say that we are giving it our most serious consideration, and that we hope very shortly to be able to discuss it with the Japanese Minister.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 125, No. 116.]

No. 120.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 678.

Tôkiô, May 29, 1905.

Tel. (No. 127.) Most Secret.

D. 1.20 P.M.Your telegram No. 59 (of May 27, 1905).⁽¹⁾

New Treaty.

Foreign Minister has given me a copy of document mentioned in your tel[egram] which he says is not a draft of new treaty, but a summary of main points to be inserted in the same. With regard to article III of the summary the geographical scope does not include anything west of India, consequently Persia is excluded.

Article VI was inserted to make Great Britain's position during present war quite clear. With regard to No. III of the secret articles, Baron Komura states that Japanese Government are of opinion that present war is the outcome of Korean intrigues in their dealings with other Powers and the "sinister influence of Russia": the latter power by trying to gain paramount influence in Korea brought about war. In order to obviate a recurrence of this, Japanese Government are determined to establish a protectorate over Korea and take foreign relations of that country into their hands; existing treaties with other Powers will be of course respected and upheld.

(1) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 121.

*Minute by the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Anglo-Japanese Agreement.*

F.O. Japan 678.

Foreign Office, May 31, 1905.

I circulate a revised draft for the consideration of the Cabinet.⁽¹⁾

It has been seen by the Prime Minister.

I shall be obliged to any of my colleagues who have suggestions to make for the amendment of the draft, if they will favour me with them as soon as possible.

L.

31/5.

(1) [Some footnotes, appended to the revised draft of June 5, 1905, *infra*, pp. 134-5, show the differences between the draft of May 31 and that of June 5.]

No. 122.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 131.) Most Secret.

Tôkiô, June 1, 1905.

D. 1:10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 61 of May 30.⁽¹⁾

Withdrawal of battleships.

I will ascertain views of the Japanese Government, but unless arrangement is temporary, they will most probably dissent on account of No. 1 of the secret articles of the new alliance.

MINUTE.

But our existing Agreement with Japan which is reproduced in Art. I (secret) as comm[unicate]d by Viscount Hayashi, only binds us to keep a stronger naval force in Far Eastern Waters than any third Power. With 7 armoured cruisers we should be far stronger than any third Power except possibly the U[nited] S[tates] who have three Battleships, but nothing worth mentioning in the cruiser class.

F. A. C.
1/6.

L.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It states the Admiralty's view that the retention of British battleships in the Far East was unnecessary owing to the destruction of the Russian fleet. F.O. Japan 594.]

No. 123.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, June 2, 1905.

D. 3:20 P.M.

R. 8 P.M.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 135.)

Your telegram No. 61: Withdrawal of battle-ships.

Following is the reply of the Japanese Admiralty:—

“The Imperial Navy Department believes it to be advisable as a temporary measure that the British battle-ships be withdrawn to European waters in consideration of event (of) complications arising out of peace negotiations, and that a squadron of five armoured cruisers should be kept in the East. They hope, however, that the British Government will recognize as an established principle the absolute necessity that each allied Empire should always maintain a naval force in the waters of the Far East superior in strength to that of any third Power having the largest naval force in the Far East.”

No. 124.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 64.)

Foreign Office, June 3, 1905.

D. 4:55 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 135 (of June 2nd. Withdrawal of battleships on China Station).⁽¹⁾

Question will come before Cabinet on Tuesday when I will inform you of final decision.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

We fully recognize necessity of providing ample security in waters of Far East, and Japanese Gov[ernmen]t may rest assured that we shall make no proposal inconsistent with this principle.

[ED. NOTE.—As the result of the circulation of the draft treaty on May 29, a number of criticisms were made of its wording. The following revised draft shows the results of these suggestions.]

No. 125.

Minute by the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

F.O. Japan 673.

I circulate a fresh revise of the draft in which I have endeavoured to give effect to suggestions made by several of my colleagues.

L.

Foreign Office, June 5, 1905.

Draft Agreement.

PREAMBLE.

The Governments of Great Britain and Japan, being desirous of replacing the Agreement concluded between them on the 30th January, 1902, by fresh stipulations, have agreed upon the following Articles, which have for their object—

- (a.) The protection of the respective rights and special interests of the contracting parties in Eastern and Southern Asia, and notably those of Japan in Corea and in territories adjoining Japan, and those of Great Britain in India and in territories adjoining India;⁽¹⁾
- (b.) The preservation of the common interests of all Powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China;
- (c.) The consolidation and maintenance of the general peace in the East:—

ARTICLE I.

If in consequence of unprovoked attack, or of aggressive action on the part of any other Power or Powers, either Party should become involved in war in defence of its rights and special interests mentioned in section (a) of the preamble,⁽²⁾ the other Contracting Party will at once come to its assistance, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

⁽¹⁾ [In the draft circulated on May 31, (a) and (c) were in the reverse order. (c), i.e., the (a) of June 5, differed in the wording of the latter part. After "Southern Asia" it reads "including territories in proximity to Japan, notably Corea, and in proximity to India, notably Afghanistan and Seistan," instead of the words given in italics in the above text of June 5.]

⁽²⁾ [Draft circulated 31 May: "If either contracting party should be unprovokedly attacked by any other Power or Powers, or should in pursuance of the objects mentioned in the preamble of this Agreement, become involved in war owing to the aggressive action of any Power or Powers," &c.]

ARTICLE II.

The obligation of either Contracting Party *to come to the assistance of the other, as provided in the preceding Article, is limited in respect of operations on land to the regions mentioned in section (a) of the preamble, and no obligation in that respect⁽³⁾* shall arise unless and until hostilities or warlike operations have taken place *or are apprehended* in the said regions.

ARTICLE III.

The right of Japan to take such measures as she may deem right and necessary in order to safeguard her special political, military, and economical interests in Corea is fully recognized by Great Britain, provided always that such measures do not *infringe the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industries of all nations.*⁽⁴⁾

ARTICLE IV.

Japan, on the other hand, equally recognizes the special interests of Great Britain in the regions adjacent to the Indian frontier and her right to take such measures as she may deem proper and necessary in order to safeguard those interests.

ARTICLE V.

The High Contracting Parties agree that neither of them will, without consulting the other, enter into separate arrangements with another Power to the prejudice of the interests above described.

ARTICLE VI.

In order that the alliance may not be invoked without clear and unavoidable necessity, it is agreed that whenever, in the opinion of either Great Britain or Japan, the above-mentioned interests are in jeopardy, the two Governments will communicate with one another fully and frankly.

ARTICLE VII.

The present Agreement shall, subject to the provisions of Article VIII, come into effect immediately after the date of its signature, and remain in force for ten years from that date.

In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said ten years the intention of terminating it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. But if, when the date fixed for its expiration arrives, either ally is actually engaged in war, the alliance shall, *ipso facto*, continue until peace is concluded.

ARTICLE VIII.

As regards the present war between Japan and Russia, Great Britain will continue to maintain strict neutrality unless some other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against Japan, in which case England will come to the assistance of Japan, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with Japan.

⁽³⁾ [Draft circulated 31 May : "to afford military assistance on land to the other as provided in the preceding article, is limited to the regions of Eastern Asia and India, and those immediately adjacent to the Indian frontier. No obligation in respect of assistance other than naval, shall arise unless and until hostilities or warlike operations have taken place in the said regions."]

⁽⁴⁾ [Draft circulated 31 May : "Existing treaty rights."]

Notes to be exchanged containing the following Stipulations.

(A.)

After the conclusion of the present war, each of the Contracting Parties will endeavour to maintain at all times available for concentration in the waters of the Far East a naval force superior in strength to that of any third Power.*

(B.)

The nature and degree of armed assistance to be afforded by either Power to the other in the circumstances mentioned in the Agreement signed this day, and the means by which such assistance is to be made available, will be arranged by the Naval and Military authorities of the Contracting Parties, *who will from time to time consult one another fully and freely upon all questions of mutual interest.*⁽⁵⁾

* *Note.*—This will probably require modification. As the text stands it might compel the Parties to maintain a superfluously large number of ships in the Far East. [L.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On June 6, Viscount Hayashi called to see Lord Lansdowne and a further discussion took place as to the terms of the proposed treaty. The following extract from Lord Lansdowne's despatch No. 98 of June 6 to Sir C. MacDonald gives Lord Lansdowne's views as expressed on this occasion :

“ I said that the main points seemed to be the definition of—

- (i) the interests for the sake of which the Contracting Parties were prepared to go to war;
- (ii) the geographical limits within which each Party might assist the other; and
- (iii) the nature and extent of that assistance.

As to (a) [(i)], I read to Viscount Hayashi the following Preamble and Articles which I told him I had drafted tentatively for the purpose of discussion :—

Preamble.

The Governments of Great Britain and Japan, being desirous of replacing the Agreement concluded between them on the 30th January, 1902, by fresh stipulations, have agreed upon the following Articles, which have for their object—

- (a.) The consolidation and maintenance of the general peace in the East;
- (b.) The preservation of the common interests of all Powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China;
- (c.) The maintenance of the territorial integrity of the possessions of the Contracting Parties in Eastern and South Eastern Asia, and the defence of their special rights and interests in the countries in the proximity of such possessions.

ARTICLE I.

It is agreed that whenever, in the opinion of either Great Britain or Japan, any of the interests referred to in the Preamble of this Agreement are in jeopardy, the two Governments will communicate with one another fully and frankly, and will consider in common the measures which should be taken in order to safeguard those interests.

ARTICLE II.

If in consequence of unprovoked attack, or of aggressive action on the part of any other Power or Powers, either Party should become involved in war in defence of its rights and special interests mentioned in section (c) of the preamble, the other Contracting Party will at once come to its assistance, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.”

On the next day the whole draft treaty was printed once more for the use of the Cabinet. The Preamble and Articles I and II were as given above; Article II of the previous draft (*v. supra*,

(5) [The words in italics were not in the draft of May 31, which ended with “ Contracting Parties.”]

p. 135) was omitted, as also Article VI, the latter being in fact covered by the new Article I. Articles VII and VIII of the draft of June 5 then become Articles VI and VII. The notes remained unchanged.

This draft was further discussed and amended, being finally reprinted on June 10, and in the revised form communicated to the Japanese Government. v. immediately succeeding document, and *infra*, pp. 165-9, column 1.]

No. 126.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 101.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 10, 1905.

I gave the Japanese Minister to-day a draft of the proposed Agreement between Great Britain and Japan of which a copy is attached to this Despatch.⁽¹⁾

Viscount Hayashi had already seen the preamble and the first two Articles of the Draft. I called his attention particularly to the fact that should hostilities due to unprovoked attack &c., arise in some region outside the limits described in paragraph C of the preamble and should those hostilities subsequently endanger the interests of Great Britain within those limits, Japan would be bound under Art[icle] II to come to our assistance. Viscount Hayashi said that he fully understood that this was intended.

I also pointed out to him the manner in which the paragraph marked A was now drawn. We contemplated that the necessary naval force should be available for concentration in the waters of the Far East but not necessarily maintained in those waters. We had also stipulated that each party should maintain a force superior in strength not to that of any other Power, but to that of any European Power in those seas. This was done in order that we might not be compelled to level our fleets up to the strength of the naval force maintained by the U[nited] S[tates] in or near the Far East. We did not consider it at all likely that we should be at war with the United States and unless this exception were made Great Britain and Japan would each be obliged to maintain a superfluous number of ships.

I said that we desired to obtain the opinion of the Japanese Government as to the maximum limit to be named in par[agraph] B.

I explained to V[iscoun]t Hayashi that the draft had been prepared upon the basis of the outline with which he had supplied me and that it was offered to the Japanese Government as a basis for discussion.

He expressed his thanks and promised to communicate the draft to the Japanese Government by telegram.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *infra*, pp. 165-9. The draft was minuted by King Edward "App[rove]d provisionally. E.R."]

No. 127.

Brigadier-General J. M. Grierson to Sir Thomas Sanderson.

F.O. Japan 673.

Secret.

Dear Sir Thomas,

Winchester House,

St. James's Square, S.W.,

June 16, 1905.

In accordance with the request contained in your letter of the 8th instant,⁽¹⁾ I enclose our observations on the proposed Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

I know it to be your wish that we should, as a rule, limit what we have to say to the purely military side of the question, and I have therefore dealt solely with the two points on which Lord Lansdowne asked for an opinion.

I trust I may be pardoned for saying here, however, that Japan seems to derive more advantage from the Agreement than we do. If she is attacked by any Power we are, as I read the Agreement, bound to assist her; while if we are attacked she is not bound to assist us unless the attack is made⁽²⁾ on our possessions in East or South-east Asia—an improbable, in fact almost impossible, contingency with the exception of an attack by Russia, and even in the latter case the value of Japanese assistance is somewhat problematical.

From a military point of view therefore it would, I think, be to our advantage if the treaty should refer to a coalition only, each Power being solely responsible for safeguarding its own interests against the aggression of a third Power. However, there may be many reasons of a non-military nature which justify us concluding the Agreement, and of these I am not qualified to judge.

I should add that possibly, though not very probably, the observations I enclose may require modification when the situation in the Far East is cleared up as a result of the present war.

I remain, &c.

J. M. GRIERSON.

Enclosure in No. 127.

Observations by the General Staff, War Office, on the Proposed Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

Lord Lansdowne requests that the General Staff will give their opinion as to whether any, and if so what, proposals would be mutually advantageous for defining:—

- (a.) The character of the military assistance to be afforded by either Power to the other.
- (b.) The territorial limits within which such assistance should be given.

2. In the first place it seems necessary to recapitulate the objects aimed at by the Contracting Parties. They may be stated thus:—

Japan desires to remain predominant in, if not in actual possession of, Korea; to preserve the integrity of China, or at any rate to prevent any Power other than herself from extending its influence in that country; and to feel secure against a hostile coalition which may, sooner or later, be formed against her with the view of impeding that commercial progress which she no doubt hopes to make after she has finished with Russia.

On our side we desire to maintain the "open door" in China, and the integrity of Afghanistan and Persia—in other words, the integrity of China and the safety of India.⁽³⁾

As regards China, therefore, the interests of the two Parties are more or less identical, and accordingly it is to the advantage of each that the other should not be attacked and defeated by a third Power or coalition of Powers.

3. At the same time it would appear not to be prudent to place too much reliance on Japan coming to our assistance in the event of our becoming involved in war in defence of our special interests in India. History furnishes many examples of expected assistance not being forthcoming, owing to different interpretations being respectively placed on the wording of a treaty by the parties to it. A celebrated case—

(2) [Marginal correction by Lord Lansdowne: "extends to."]

(3) [Marginal note by Lord Lansdowne: "I am not sure that this is quite a fair recital."]

to quote only one—is that of the difference between England and Holland in 1756 as to the meaning of the treaties of guarantee of 1678, 1709, 1713, and 1777. By these treaties England and Holland guaranteed to each other all their rights and possessions in Europe against “all kings, princes, republics, and states,” and specific assistance was stipulated if either should “be attacked or molested by hostile act or open war, or in any other manner disturbed in the possession of its states, territories, rights, immunities, and freedom of commerce.” On assistance being demanded by England from Holland, however, the latter Power declined to give it, arguing that the guarantee applied only to cases in which the State in want of help was in the first instance the attacked and not the attacking party in the war, and alleged that England was in fact the aggressor.

4. There is only one guarantee that the Power which signs a treaty will fulfil the military obligations which the treaty imposes.⁽¹⁾ It is that the acts which it has bound itself to perform or to leave undone, are acts which its own interests, and which an intelligent and patriotic view of its own welfare, require to be done or to be left undone. In short, for a treaty to be of real value it must be the expression of permanent interests on *both* sides. . . .⁽⁵⁾

9. Turning to the question of Japan being the party attacked, it is evident that we could not send any considerable body of troops to assist her in the Far East, for we might at any moment require all we have for employment across the North-West Frontier of India. Still, a force of cavalry and Horse Artillery, arms which for all practical purposes the Japanese army does not possess, and which it might be found possible to spare from India, might be of incalculable value to the Japanese Forces. At the conference held in 1902 between the War Office and the Japanese authorities the latter seemed to hope that we would send troops to them, but judging from what Viscount Hayashi has said it appears that no help in this shape is now needed or expected.

10. Japan might, however, expect us to take military measures against Russia in other parts of the world, and this, with the possible exception of taking advantage of such insurrectionary movements as at present obtain in the Caucasus, we could only do through Afghanistan. We might accordingly be placed in a very difficult position, for unless Russia invaded Afghanistan we could not reach her forces except by invading that country ourselves. If we did invade it, we should be regarded by the Afghans as the aggressors, and in all probability would have to fight them as well as the Russians.⁽⁶⁾

11. So far as war with Russia alone is concerned, therefore, the case may be summarised thus:—

- (a.) We cannot depend upon Japan sending troops to assist us across the North-West Frontier of India, as the war with Russia might be begun under circumstances which, to Japan, would not appear to justify her in sending them, or indeed going to war at all.
- (b.) If, eventually, she were able and willing to send them we might lose rather than gain by their help.
- (c.) Action taken by her against Russian possessions in the Far East would not necessarily relieve to any great extent pressure on India. (Para. 7.)
- (d.) If Japan were the party attacked, we might not be able to bring pressure to bear on Russia in any part of the world except Central Asia, and probably

(4) [Marginal note by Lord Lansdowne: “True—but this difficulty is inherent.”]

(5) [Paragraphs 5–8 are here omitted. They may be summarised as follows: Paragraphs 5–6 discuss the value of the integrity of Afghanistan and Persia to Japan, and the possible invasion of the two countries by Russia. Paragraphs 7–8 deal with the difficulties in the way of Japanese cooperation in the defence of India, and suggest that the Government of India’s opinion should be taken.]

(6) [Marginal note by Lord Lansdowne: “The practicability of such measures would have to be discussed by the two Gov[ernmen]ts or their expert advisers. We must assume that the Japanese are reasonable.”]

not even there—at any rate for a long time and with considerable difficulty—unless she first invaded Afghanistan.

- (c.) The above amounts to the conclusion that so far as military operations are concerned neither Party can be of direct assistance to the other; and indirectly only to a problematical extent.

12. In the event of France or Germany being hostile, Japanese troops could be effectively employed against the foreign possessions of these Powers. France attaches great value to Indo-China, and Germany to Kiao-chau. Both these localities would therefore constitute useful objectives. The Japanese Navy would also prove valuable to us in helping to clear the sea and so admit of reinforcements being sent to India. It must be remembered, however, that the first and main attack by these Powers would be made in the Western Hemisphere, and the brunt of it we should have to bear unaided. Regarded from this standpoint, Japan—a very shrewd nation—would appear to have decidedly the best of the bargain. She cannot, until the whole strategical situation has been greatly changed from what it now is, either be invaded or suddenly subjected to serious attack on the sea; and therefore she can always depend upon our aid becoming available in sufficient time to be of use to her. We, on the other hand, might be attacked weeks or even months before Japanese assistance could possibly produce any effect.

13. In the military contingency of the United States being hostile, Japanese troops could advantageously be employed against the Philippines, and also against the States themselves, thus indirectly assisting in the defence of Canada.

14. In none of the above cases would it seem necessary or desirable to define in the Agreement either the character of the assistance to be afforded or the territorial limits within which such assistance should be given. In these days the strategical situation changes so quickly that arrangements made for combined action must frequently be revised, and therefore they can, it is thought, best be dealt with, as required from time to time, by the Naval and Military authorities of the contracting parties.⁽⁷⁾

15. The General Staff are of opinion, however, that the territories to which the treaty is intended to refer should be more clearly defined either in (c) of the preamble or in Article IV, than they are at present. Neither Afghanistan nor Persia are situated in "South-eastern Asia," and unless these two countries are specifically mentioned the treaty might, as stated in paragraphs 5 and 6, be interpreted to our disadvantage.

MINUTE.

It is rather surprizing to me that this extremely important expression of opinion should not have been elicited earlier in the day by the S[ecretary of] S[tate] for War.

I do not agree with some of Gen[eral] Grierson's arguments and there is a passage in his letter which shows I think that he somewhat misapprehends the nature of the Jap[anese] obligation.

Please have letter and memo[andum] printed as quickly as possible and copy sent to Mr. Balfour.

Do not print my pencil notes.^(*)

L.
17/6.

⁽⁷⁾ [Marginal note by Lord Lansdowne: "This seems right."]

^(*) [These are given above, pp. 138-40, notes ⁽²⁾ to ⁽⁷⁾.]

No. 128.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 109.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 23, 1905.

The Japanese Minister brought me to-day a revised draft, of which a copy is attached to this despatch, of the proposed new Anglo-Japanese Agreement.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [v. *infra*, pp. 165-9, No. 155, column 2.]

I told Viscount Hayashi that the new drafting of Article II seemed to me to effect a substantial alteration in its meaning. Under our draft, one Contracting Party would come to the assistance of the other in the event of its interests being "endangered." Under the Japanese draft, assistance would be given only where the other Party had actually become involved in war.

Viscount Hayashi explained to me that the Japanese proposal to strike out Article IV was due to the fact that Japan did not admit that the interests of Great Britain in the proximity of the Indian frontier were open to question. The Article seemed to them therefore superfluous. On the other hand they wished to retain Article III, which deals with Korea, in which country Japan had acquired a pre-dominant position. Great Britain and several other Powers had however interests in Korea, and it was therefore necessary to make it clear that the paramount position of Japan in Korea was to be recognised. She would have to make her own terms with the other Powers interested in that country.

I told Viscount Hayashi that the omission of Article IV was, in my opinion, to be deprecated. That Article and Art[icle] III balanced one another, and both of them seemed to me to be necessary in order to make it clear that, whether Japan became involved owing to the aggression of another Power upon Korea, or whether India became involved owing to the aggression of another Power upon countries adjoining India, the involved party would in either case have a right to call upon the other to come to its aid.

With regard to the proposed omission of Stipulation B, Viscount Hayashi said that the Japanese Government were opposed to the idea of naming a maximum limit. If the two countries went to war as allies, each country would have to put forth its full strength. We should put forth the whole of our naval power, and Japan would be ready to do the same with her land forces.

Irrespectively of this, the Japanese Government were convinced that the nature and scope of the assistance to be given should be the subject of arrangement between the military and the naval advisers of the two Powers, and that any such arrangement should be subject to revision from time to time.

Viscount Hayashi told me that Japan would be glad to know whether we thought that the new Agreement, if concluded, should be made public before the end of the present war.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 129.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 678.

(No. 172.) Most Secret.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. June 29, 1905.

R. July 31, 1905.

On the 23rd instant, I telegraphed to Your Lordship that Baron Komura had handed to me Your Lordship's draft of the new Alliance and the amended Japanese counter-draft.⁽¹⁾

Baron Komura has, on several occasions approached me on the subject, and asked whether Your Lordship had communicated with me respecting the terms of the draft and counter-draft. I have always replied that I had had no communication since

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 165-9, No. 155, columns 1 and 2.]

May 27 (Your Lordship's telegram No. 59⁽²⁾), and that I had no authority to discuss the terms in any way, but I had no objection, since he had shown me the two drafts, to talk the matter over with him quite informally and privately, and on more than one occasion we have discussed the terms of the new Alliance in this manner.

Yesterday I saw Baron Komura, and he again asked me whether I had heard anything from Your Lordship with regard to the Japanese Counter-draft. On my replying in the negative, he said that doubtless the arrival of Prince and Princess Arisugawa in London was occupying the attention of everybody to a great extent and an answer could not be expected until their visit was over. I pointed out that the visit of Their Imperial Highnesses, being without political motive, was a matter which concerned the Royal Family and the people of England more than it concerned the Government. The delay was doubtless due to the very great importance of the question, which was one which had to be most carefully weighed and considered, and could not be decided in a hurry.

Baron Komura spoke again about the two drafts, and repeated much that he had said before, which, as I think it may prove interesting, I venture to place as briefly as possible before Your Lordship.

Baron Komura said it would be noticed that, in the Japanese amended draft, no mention was made in the preamble or elsewhere of England's special interests in China, such as was made in the Anglo-Japanese alliance now in force, which contains a special allusion to the interests of Great Britain in China; but the Japanese Government considered that this was entirely covered by the wording of (c) in the preamble of the Japanese amended draft, which lays down that the Treaty has for its objects "the maintenance of the territorial rights of the High Contracting Parties in the regions of Eastern Asia and India," which, he said, of course included China.

As to the second half of Article IV of the British draft, which lays down that "Japan equally recognizes the special interests of Great Britain in the region adjacent to the Indian frontier, and her right to take such measures as she may deem proper and necessary in order to safeguard those interests," Baron Komura pointed out that, as Japan had no interests whatever in those regions, and considered that Great Britain had every right to take any steps whatever to guard her interests on her Indian frontier, and in the countries adjacent, Japan would consider it as an interference on her part to place such a statement on record.

As to Article III in the Japanese amended draft, which commences, "Japan possessing special paramount political, military, and economical interests in Korea, ..." Baron Komura could not conceal from me that this was the real object of the whole alliance, and the readiness and alacrity with which Japan has accepted the proposal of His Majesty's Government to form a new alliance, and relative to which I expressed surprise in my last despatch on the subject (No. 143 of the May 25⁽³⁾), is now pretty clearly revealed.

Japan has quite determined, after the war, to establish a protectorate over Korea. This being so, the Anglo-Japanese alliance, as it at present stands, would be a most inconvenient stumbling-block. For, as Your Lordship is aware, the language of the preamble and of the first article lays down that "Great Britain and Japan are specially interested in maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the Empire of Korea."

As, by Article III of the Japanese amended draft, Great Britain "recognises the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance, control, and protection in Korea as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance" her interests in that country, it is clear that the present Anglo-Japanese alliance must disappear, and the *quid pro quo* offered by Japan for Great Britain's acquiescence in Japan's protectorate over Korea is practical immunity from an attack on India by Russia.

Baron Komura has several times mentioned that the geographical scope, as

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 132, No. 119.]

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 126-8, No. 117.]

represented by the words in the British draft—"Eastern and South-Eastern Asia"—seemed somewhat extended, and that "Eastern Asia and India" appeared to him less likely to give rise to misapprehension in the future.

As to this point I had an interesting conversation yesterday afternoon with Mr. Denison, the adviser to the Japanese Foreign Office. Mr. Denison, I have no doubt whatever, drafted the "Japanese amended draft." He told me that the Japanese were afraid that the English wording—"Eastern and South-Eastern Asia"—meant that Japan might be called upon to take part in punitive expeditions, into Thibet, Afghanistan or other recalcitrant border states! For that reason, they had also asked that the second half of Article IV of the English draft might be struck out.

Mr. Denison had assured the members of the Cabinet that Great Britain would only call for Japanese co-operation when she was attacked in India by one of the Great Powers, and that she was quite capable of policing her frontiers. Mr. Denison said that the Japanese Government thoroughly understood that, if Russia attacked by way of Persia, the alliance would at once come into operation. He also said that the *quid pro quo* for this co-operation in India was England's acquiescence in Japan's protectorate over Corea.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

No. 130.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 114.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 1, 1905.

I asked the Japanese Minister to call upon me this evening, and showed him the second British draft of the proposed Anglo-Japanese Agreement.⁽¹⁾ I called Viscount Hayashi's attention to the points at which it differed from the Japanese counter-draft communicated by him to me on the 23rd of June.

With reference to Article II, I again asked him whether I was right in supposing that, in the view of the Japanese Government, each of the Contracting Parties was bound to come to the assistance of the other should it become involved in war in defence of its territorial rights and special interests, irrespective of the fact that the quarrel might have arisen in some other part of the world—*e.g.*, I said, out of a quarrel between Great Britain and Russia as to Denmark. Viscount Hayashi unhesitatingly answered that I was right in my assumption.

We had some conversation with regard to the proposal to insert in Article III (the Korean Article) words having reference to the treaty rights of other nations. The Minister told me very frankly that Japan desired to be given as free a hand as possible in Korea, but admitted that our commerce should be given equal opportunities in that country. They were however reluctant to say too much about the treaty rights of other nations. He was afraid that some other nation might put forward a claim based upon an exaggerated interpretation of a most-favoured-nation treatment clause, and that we might thereupon find ourselves called upon to take the part of that other nation. I pointed out to him that no agreement which we could make would have the effect of depriving a third Power of any treaty rights to which she was entitled, and that I thought it might be good policy to insert in our Treaty words making it quite clear that we neither of us desired to encroach upon the rights of others.

Viscount Hayashi raised no objection to my proposal to retain Article IV (the Indian Article) to which I told him we attached considerable importance.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 165-9, No. 155, column 1 and notes.]

As to Note B, he pointed out that Japan would henceforth be obliged so to organise her military forces in time of peace as to provide in time of war a suitable force for service in India. Such a force, he said, would be outside her ordinary preparations. On the other hand, he could conceive a case in which Russia might concentrate the whole of her strength in an attack upon Japan in the hope of overwhelming her at the outset of the war. In such a case it would not be possible for her to send to India the number of men stipulated for. I said that I thought the wording of Note B was capable of improvement, but that we attached importance to making it perfectly clear that the military arrangements of Japan would henceforth provide for an expeditionary force available for service in India.

The Minister apparently regarded with approval the new Note D.

I gave His Excellency a copy of the new draft, explaining that it had not yet been seen by the Cabinet, and that His Majesty's Government must not be regarded as officially committed to its terms.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 131.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 170.)

Tel. P.⁽¹⁾

Tōkiō, July 8, 1905.

The following is secret, having reference to the new alliance :—

I saw Baron Komura this morning. His Excellency gave me a copy of the amendments made by your Lordship to the Japanese counter-proposals.⁽²⁾ He also gave me a copy of the Japanese reply to these amendments, which he had sent to Viscount Hayashi on the 6th instant. I have also just seen the Prime Minister. Both Ministers repeated the arguments set forth in the Japanese reply. They dwelt strongly on the two very important points regarding which agreement has not yet been reached by the two Powers.

I refer to the geographical scope of the new alliance, and the change which your Lordship has proposed in Article III, viz., that the following words should be introduced : "Provided always that such measures do not infringe" the Treaty rights of other Powers.

With regard to the first of these points, the Japanese Government think that the wording proposed by your Lordship, "region in proximity to the Indian frontier," is tantamount to an indefinite extension of the geographical scope, and to such an indefinite extension the Japanese people and all the members of the Grand Council are very averse. The scope indicated by the formula "India and Eastern Asia" is to them definite and clear.

The following points came out clearly in the course of my conversation with Count Katsura and Baron Komura :—

1. They think that we might consider ourselves entitled to invoke the alliance should we undertake a punitive expedition into any of the States in proximity to the frontier, e.g., Afghanistan, Thibet, or Persia, and Japan would thus

⁽¹⁾ [This is given in paraphrase, as the original cannot be traced.]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

become involved in war with that State. I said that I had no instructions from your Lordship, but I did not think that it was intended by His Majesty's Government to construe the Article in any such sense.

2. They think that, should we undertake such a punitive expedition and some other Power were to object, Japan would become involved with us against this third Power. I did not venture an opinion on this point.
3. The Ministers are of opinion that, for all practical purposes, the region in proximity to the Indian frontier is included in the alliance, because the alliance would at once become operative were India involved, and trouble could hardly rise in that region without India being drawn in. They dislike Article IV, however, as proposed by us, because they think it will alarm the people of this country and make them think that the Government is going too far afield. The Japanese Government readily recognize that we have special interests in this region, but as they have no interests whatever there, they think it out of place to mention our special position.

With Corea the case is different. There, while they have special interests, we have interests too, and therefore Corea is specially mentioned.

With regard to the insertion of the words proposed by your Lordship in Article III, the reasons given in the Japanese reply for their omission seem to be fair and reasonable, and I could see, from my conversation with Count Katsura and Baron Komura, that if His Majesty's Government persist on this point the new alliance will be in very close danger of shipwreck.

No. 132.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, July 8, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

D. 7 P.M.

Tel. (No. 171.) Secret.

R. 9 P.M.

New alliance. My immediately preceding tel[egram]. Min[ister] for For[eign] Aff[air]s at our interview this morning admitted that as a Japanese protectorate of Corea after the war was absolutely essential to the future peace of Japan the Japanese Gov[ernmen]t had considered what *quid pro quo* they could offer to Great Britain in order to induce her to acquiesce in such a protectorate and to nullify the declarations resp[ectin]g the independence of Corea contained in preamble and art[icle] I of existing agreement. As a result of the deliberations they had decided to acquiesce in an arrangement by which invasion of India by Russia was rendered a very remote contingency. Considering that whether we acquiesced in establishment of such a protectorate or not, the protectorate being essential to Japan's future peace will merely be established and that this alliance will render India free from all fear of attack for many generations to come I venture to think that we should accept the Japanese reply without further delay. I am aware that my opinion has not been asked but as H[is] M[ajesty's] representative on the spot I venture to put it before Y[our] E[xcellency].

Sir C. MacDonald to Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, July 12, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. Private.

D. 9 P.M.

R. 8 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 171 of July 8.⁽¹⁾ Following is an extract from a private letter to me from H[is] M[ajesty's] Representative at Seoul dated July 7. "It may be heresy to say so but I feel certain that nothing short of a protectorate will ever save the situation here. In the interests of Koreans themselves this is the only possible solution and the people as distinguished from the officials would I believe infinitely prefer it to Government which they have had during last 10 years of nominal independence."

Above is spontaneous—I have (?not) mentioned subject of protectorate to Mr. (Sir J.) Jordan.

(¹) [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 122.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 14, 1905.

The Japanese Minister brought to me to-day the criticisms of the Imperial Government upon the second British draft of the new Anglo-Japanese Agreement⁽¹⁾—*vide* my despatch No. 114 of the 1st July.⁽²⁾ They were as follows:—

Article III. The Japanese Government propose to retain in the first line the word "paramount," omitting the word "special." They desire to omit in the same Article the reference to the Treaty rights of other nations. The proviso should, they think, run as follows—"provided always that such measures do not infringe the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations." Viscount Hayashi explained to me that in the opinion of the Imperial Government the reference to "the treaty rights of other nations" would encourage other Powers entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment in Corea to strain their rights against Japan. As I was aware, there were many interpretations of most-favoured-nation treatment, and some Powers who enjoyed a right to it were in the habit of claiming in respect of that right equality of treatment not only in regard to commerce, but in respect, *e.g.*, of the construction of railways and telegraphs. It would be very inconvenient to Japan that such equality should be claimed by the Powers in Corea, and the Japanese Government deprecated the use of language which would not only encourage such claims but render it difficult for Great Britain not to support them. The original wording, as at first proposed by us, was sufficient to protect "the real interests" of other Powers.

Article IV. The Japanese Government begged that this Article should be omitted, not because they did not recognise the special interests of Great Britain in the regions in proximity to the Indian frontier and our right to safeguard those interests in whatever way we considered proper and necessary, nor because, should we become involved in war by so doing, the Japanese Government desired to be relieved of the responsibility of coming to our assistance. The words

(¹) [*v. infra*, pp. 165-9, No. 155, column 1 and notes.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 143-4, No. 130.]

“wherever arising” in Article II accepted by Japan showed clearly that they had no wish to impose any such limitations. On the other hand, the Japanese Government considered that the Article as it stood would have a disturbing effect upon public opinion in Japan, and would in appearance give a geographical extension to the Agreement wider than had ever been contemplated by the Japanese Government.

His Excellency in these circumstances was instructed to tell me that the Imperial Government are prepared “to consider as perfectly legitimate within the meaning of Article II all measures which the British Government may see fit to take in regions in the proximity of the Indian frontier, provided these measures are found necessary for safeguarding their territorial rights in India itself. In other words the Imperial Government will regard such measures on the part of the British Government as essentially defensive and non-provocative in their nature, and consequently such measures will not in the opinion of the Imperial Government prevent Article II from being effective or preclude an appeal to it.”

Viscount Hayashi went on to propose the omission of paragraphs A, B, and D at the end of the draft. He said that, in the opinion of the Japanese Government, the nature of the assistance given by one party to the other must depend upon “the character of the conflict,” which could not be foreseen. Any attempt therefore to define long in advance the extent of that assistance would be unwise, and would hamper rather than strengthen the Alliance.

It would therefore be much better that all these questions should be dealt with from time to time by the military and naval authorities of the two Powers.

I told Viscount Hayashi that I would lose no time in bringing his observations before my colleagues.

I also asked him whether, assuming that we were able to come to terms, he thought it would be desirable to make public the fact that an agreement had been arrived at. It seemed to me that such an announcement at the very moment when peace negotiations were commencing might be subject to criticism.

Viscount Hayashi said that in his opinion there was considerable force in this argument. The Japanese Government would however be glad to have the matter settled as soon as possible. He would communicate with them in regard to the question which I had raised.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 135.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 188.) Secret.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. July 15, 1905.

R. August 14, 1905.

With reference to the amendments made by Your Lordship to the Japanese Counter-Proposals respecting the New Alliance, and the Japanese reply thereto, which was telegraphed from here to Viscount Hayashi on the 6th instant, I ventured to point out by telegraph on the 8th instant,⁽¹⁾ which I had also stated in my despatch No. 172 of June 29th,⁽²⁾ that the new alliance partook of the nature of a bargain in which,

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 144–5, No. 131.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 141–3, No. 129.]

in return for our acquiescence in the protectorate which Japan intended to establish over Korea at the conclusion of the war, she would engage to assist us should our Indian Empire be attacked by a third Power. I also pointed out that this acquiescence would entail a reconsideration and amendment of the pledge made in conjunction with Japan in the preamble and Article I of the now-existing Anglo-Japanese agreement recognizing the territorial integrity and independence of the Empire of Korea.

I ventured also in the above-quoted telegram to state that, as Japan would most certainly establish such a protectorate whether we acquiesced or not, and as her assistance in the matter of an attack on the Indian Empire would render such an event a practical impossibility for generations to come, I thought that we should accept the terms of the Japanese reply without delay. As to the future Japanese protectorate over Korea and the certainty that it will come I think there can be little doubt; reports sent to Your Lordship by Sir John Jordan from time to time show that the Japanese are getting the entire administration of the country into their hands, and both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have mentioned to me that a continuance of the state of affairs which existed in Korea before the war, and which to a certain extent exists now, was impossible and would inevitably lead to further Russian intrigues and possible war. In connection with this Baron Komura informed me that the Emperor only two months ago was in secret correspondence with M. Pavloff in Shanghai. At my last interview with these two statesmen they both said that a Japanese protectorate over Korea was essential to the peace of the Far East.

Since sending my telegram of the 8th instant, I have received on the 12th a letter dated the 7th from Sir John Jordan, than whom no one is more fitted to give an opinion, which contains the following passage :—

“It may be heresy to say so” (Sir John is probably thinking of the existing Anglo-Japanese agreement), “but I feel certain that nothing short of a protectorate will ever save the situation here. In the interests of the Koreans themselves this is the only possible solution, and the people, as distinguished from the officials would, I believe, infinitely prefer it to the Government they have had during the last ten years of nominal independence.”

As Your Lordship may remember, I was appointed Her Majesty's Representative to Corea in 1896, presenting my credentials personally to the Korean Emperor, then King, in March 1897; from my experience of the country and people I am entirely in accord with the views here put forward by Sir John Jordan. But whether we are right or wrong a Japanese protectorate over Corea will certainly be established after the war.

With regard to a possible attack on India, it may be urged that we are capable of holding our own in that quarter, and require no assistance from Japan or any other Power. Recent statements in the British House of Commons by the Prime Minister would seem to go far to strengthen this view. I would however with great deference point out that, notwithstanding the crushing defeats which Russia has received in this war, she has transported and still maintains, at a distance of over 3,000 miles from Russia proper and connected by a single line of rail, an army of 250,000 men, and that the frontiers of India are much nearer to her base than the spot, where the above army is now encamped.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.
(No. 124.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 18, 1905.

I asked the Japanese Minister to call upon me yesterday in order that I might communicate to him the impression produced upon His Majesty's Government by the suggestions which he had made to me on the occasion of our last discussion of the second British draft of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement.⁽¹⁾

I told Viscount Hayashi that we had carefully considered the suggestion of the Japanese Government that the reference to the Treaty rights of other nations should be expunged from Article III. My colleagues fully understood the reasons which led the Japanese Government to desire the omission of these words, and there was, so far as I could see, no difference between us as to the object in view. We desired that the Clause should be so worded as to afford the minimum of embarrassment hereafter to Japan. We could not however help thinking that the words "equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations" might prove even more embarrassing to Japan than the reference to the treaty rights of other nations. The former words were extremely wide, and on the strength of them it might be possible for other Powers to claim that any concession made to Japan for industrial or commercial enterprises should be compensated by equivalent concessions to themselves. On the other hand, the rights which other nations could claim on the strength of their title to most-favoured-nation treatment were those which were usually summarised in the expression "the open door," which Japan did not, we believed, intend to deny to other countries in Corea. Viscount Hayashi did not agree with me upon this point, and adhered to his belief that the special reservation of the treaty rights of other Powers was much more dangerous to Japan than the alternative sentence. What he dreaded was the claim of other Powers to equality of political influence and position in Corea. The words which the Japanese Government proposed to omit would certainly be regarded as qualifying in the most marked manner our engagement to "recognise the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance, control, and protection in Corea as she might deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance her political, military and economic interests in Corea." Viscount Hayashi suggested that, if the words were retained, it was conceivable that other Powers might claim a right to construct military posts on the Korean coast were such posts to be established by Japan. He also observed that if before peace were concluded we were to guarantee Russia in her existing treaty rights, her position as against Japan would be greatly strengthened. The Japanese Government regarded this point as vital, and he did not think that they would care for the Treaty if the objectionable words remained in it.

We then proceeded to discuss Article IV, and I explained to him that we attached the greatest importance to retaining such an Article in the Treaty. I said that I had communicated to my colleagues the statement which he had been instructed to make to me upon this point (*vide* my despatch No. 122 of the 14th instant),⁽¹⁾ and that we were entirely satisfied with the language used by the Japanese Government, which seemed to us indeed to be admirably chosen. We thought it however most important that these assurances should be embodied in the Treaty itself, and not merely in a Note. I said that if the Japanese Government were obliged to take into consideration the effect which might be produced by the insertion of such a Clause upon Japanese public opinion, we also had to take into account the effect which would be produced upon public opinion here if the Korean Clause were to be retained and no such reference as we had proposed were to be made to British interests upon the confines of India.

We then discussed various alternative draftings, and I asked His Excellency

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 146-7, No. 184.]

whether he thought that the Japanese Government would accept a clause worded somewhat as follows:—"Japan recognises the special interests of Great Britain in all that concerns the security of the Indian frontier, and her right to take such measures in the proximity of that frontier as she may find necessary for safeguarding her Indian Possessions." Viscount Hayashi thought that the wording which I had proposed might be acceptable.

I informed him that we had no objection to the omission of Paragraphs A and B, but that we thought it necessary, either by means of an Article in the Treaty or by an exchange of Notes, to make it clear that this country was not assuming under the Agreement a new and formidable *military* liability. Viscount Hayashi expressed his conviction that the Japanese Government had no desire to impose any such liability upon us, and felt confident that they would authorise us to state that this was the case. I gathered from him that the Japanese Government would not mind omitting the words under which Japan was relieved of the obligation to send ships out of Asiatic waters.

Viscount Hayashi came to see me again this morning, and we had some further discussion of the question which had arisen with regard to Article III. I pointed out to him that if the reference to treaty rights were to be omitted, it was conceivable—to take an extreme case—that Japan, in her endeavour to secure her "paramount political, military, and economic interests" in Corea, might attempt some encroachment upon the rights of another Power, and thereby involve herself in war with it. In such a case, would Japan expect us to come to her assistance? The point was one which it was obviously necessary to guard carefully. Viscount Hayashi assured me that nothing was further from the intentions of the Japanese Government than to ride rough-shod over the treaty rights of other Powers. If those rights stood in her way, she would have to come to an arrangement with the Powers concerned. I replied that we were far from imputing any such intentions to the Japanese Government, but that the question would certainly be raised when the Treaty came to be discussed. I referred to the position of Great Britain in Egypt, where we certainly had a paramount position, but where we nevertheless had to reckon with the rights of the other Powers and make the best terms we could with them. I suggested as a solution of the difficulty that for the words "do not infringe the treaty rights of other nations" we might perhaps substitute the words "are not contrary to established treaty rights." This would avoid the assertion of dormant or extravagant claims. I also suggested that there might be an interchange of Notes in which it would be made clear that Japan had no intention of summoning us to her assistance in any case where the established treaty rights of other Powers were in question.

Viscount Hayashi's personal opinion was that both these suggestions might be entertained by the Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t, and I undertook to submit them to my colleagues.

[I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.]

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 197.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 125.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 19, 1905.

I told the Japanese Minister to-day that I had laid before the Cabinet the substance of the communications which had passed between us on the occasion of our recent conversations as to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, and I handed him a

corrected draft, a copy of which is attached to this despatch. I also handed to him the draft of a Note to be exchanged, after the signature of the Agreement, dealing with the interpretation of Article III. A copy of this draft is also enclosed with this despatch. I informed Viscount Hayashi that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government such a Note would be sufficient for the purpose of making it clear that we were not to be called upon to come to the assistance of Japan in support of any measures adopted in violation of established Treaty rights, and that if the Note were agreed to by the Japanese Government we were prepared to omit all reference to Treaty rights from Article III.

Viscount Hayashi expressed himself much gratified, and told me that in his opinion the Japanese Government would in all probability accept the draft and the Note in their present form.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Enclosure 1 in No. 137.

[Draft Agreement, v. *infra*, pp. 165–9, No. 155.]

Enclosure 2 in No. 137.

Draft of Note from the Marquess of Lansdowne to Viscount Hayashi.

Sir,

With reference to Article III of the Agreement signed by us this day, in which Great Britain recognises the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance, protection and control in Corea as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard her interests in that country, provided always that such measures are not contrary to the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations, it has been clearly understood between us that the Article does not contemplate the adoption of any measures which would be in violation of established Treaty rights, and that the Japanese Government would not consider themselves entitled to call upon His Majesty's Government under the Article to come to their assistance in support of measures of such a character. I should be glad to receive from you a written confirmation of the assurances which you have given me in this respect.

[I have, &c.]
LANSLOWNE.]

No. 138.

Note by Mr. A. J. Balfour.

F.O. Japan 673.
Lord Lansdowne,

House of Commons, July 19, 1905.

I think the draft exactly carries out the view of the Cabinet. You will however remember that the Cabinet were not prepared to *insist* on the explicit declaration by Japan that she would not violate "established treaty rights" *provided* that in any case we were not to be dragged into any quarrel which those rights might occasion.

A. J. B.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, July 20, 1905.

D. 5.30 P.M.

R. 7.30 P.M.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 175.) Secret.

New Alliance.

Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me to-day that no reply had been received from His Majesty's Government to the last Japanese note sent to Japanese Representative in London for presentation to your Lordship on 6th July. (My telegram No. 170.)⁽¹⁾ He earnestly hoped that no misunderstanding had occurred.

Personally, he thought it would be advisable to get matter settled before Peace Conference commenced sitting, though alliance need not be made public until the Conference had come to an end, or at such other time as His Majesty's Government wished.

His Excellency assured me that Japanese Government have understood and agreed that should hostilities, due to unprovoked attacks, &c., arise in some region outside geographical limits described in the preamble, and should those hostilities subsequently endanger interests of Great Britain within those limits, Japan would be bound to come to our assistance, the limits being Eastern Asia and India.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 144-5, No. 131.]

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 194.) Secret.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. July 20, 1905.

R. September 18, 1905.

On the 15th instant, in my despatch No. 188,⁽¹⁾ I ventured to point out that the terms of the Japanese reply, respecting the New Alliance, which was telegraphed by the Japanese Government to their Representative in London on the 6th instant, appeared to me to be of a very reasonable nature, and I suggested that, as the bargain, which formed the basis of the New Alliance, seemed favourable to ourselves, we should accept it without further delay. I had already, on the 8th instant, communicated these views to Your Lordship by telegraph.

This morning I had an interview with Count Katsura, the Prime Minister, acting for Baron Komura, the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Count Katsura betrayed considerable anxiety in that no answer had yet been received from His Majesty's Government to the Japanese Note of the 6th instant. He said that both the London and Tokyo newspapers had commenced to write about the Alliance, stating that negotiations were in progress, and in some cases making very correct surmises as to the terms. Personally, he thought that the Alliance should be concluded as soon as possible and before it became a matter of public knowledge. At any rate, he considered, it would be useful to get the matter settled before the peace conference commenced its sittings, though it need not be published until the conference had come to an end, or at any later time convenient to His Majesty's Government.

His Excellency asked me whether I had heard from Your Lordship with regard to the Japanese communication of the 6th instant. I replied in the negative, but added that without doubt a reply would come very shortly, for I knew that His

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 147-8, No. 135.]

Majesty's Government were giving the matter their most earnest consideration. His Excellency begged me to convey by telegraph to Your Lordship the fact that the Japanese Government were anxious, and he personally hoped that no misunderstanding had arisen.

In the course of conversation, he said that the Japanese Government thoroughly understood that, should hostilities arise in regions adjacent to the Indian frontier, due to the unprovoked action of any other Power or Powers, and should such hostilities endanger our interests in India, we should have the right to invoke the Alliance. His Excellency mentioned Thibet, Afghanistan and Persia as adjacent regions. I had the honour to convey the gist of this despatch to Your Lordship in my telegram No. 175.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

(²) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 141.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

Foreign Office, July 21, 1905.

Tel. (No. 94.)

D. 4.5 P.M.

Your telegram No. 175 (of July 20. Anglo-Japanese Alliance).⁽¹⁾

I communicated a revised draft to the Japanese Minister on the 19th instant.

In Article III reference to Treaty Rights was omitted. Article IV now runs "Japan recognizes the special interests of Great Britain in all that concerns the security of the Indian frontier and her right to take such measures in the proximity of that frontier as she may find necessary for safeguarding her Indian possessions." Of stipulations respecting notes to be exchanged A, B and D are omitted and C becomes Article VII in body of Agreement with following addition: "It is however understood that the measures agreed upon shall not include any obligation on the part of Japan to send ships out of Asiatic waters for the purpose of affording naval assistance to Great Britain or any obligation on the part of Great Britain to send troops to the Far East for the purpose of affording military assistance to Japan." I also communicated Draft of note to be exchanged after signature of agreement to the effect that it is understood that Article III does not contemplate the adoption of measures of violation of established Treaty Rights, and that Jap[anese] Gov[ernment]t would not be entitled to call upon H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]t under the Article to come to their assistance in support of such measures. Jap[anese] Minister expressed satisfaction and thought Jap[anese] Gov[ernment]t would probably accept agreement and note.

(¹) [v. *supra*, p. 152, No. 139.]

No. 142.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tôkiô, D. July 25, 1905, 11 P.M.

Tel. (No. 178.) Secret.

R. July 26, 1 P.M.

Your telegram No. 94 (of July 21, 05).⁽¹⁾ New Alliance.

Prime Minister spoke to me at length this afternoon on this subject of your telegram above quoted. A similar one had been telegraphed to him by the Japanese Minister in London.

(¹) [v. immediately preceding document.]

He desired me to say amendments therein set forth did not meet with the approval of the Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t in their present form.

In the course of conversation he said H[is] M[ajesty's] Government had by omitting reference to Treaty rights in Art[icle] 3 made said Article acceptable to Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t but that note to be exchanged after signature nullified good effects produced by omission.

Prime Minister thought that the Addition of Article VII was a mistake as it tied the hands of the military and Naval experts. I said it was probably inserted to meet adverse criticism in Parliament and that under any circumstances the expression "shall not include any obligation" was not a particularly strong one and would not in case of war prevent troops or ships being sent to the east or west respectively if experts thought they should be sent.

As to Article IV Prime Minister said that language was more in accordance with views of the Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t but he still thought it would be better to omit Article entirely.

I said this was also probably a case of guarding against adverse criticism because Corea had an article all to herself whereas India had not. I said speaking entirely privately and without instructions that I thought Article IV and the additional Article VII did not seem to be of great importance but that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would certainly require some assurance respecting the non-violation of established Treaty rights. His Excellency said that matter was being very carefully considered by the Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t and an answer would be sent shortly.⁽²⁾

Private. I do not think that the satisfaction expressed by Japanese Minister in London is at all shared by the Japanese Government.

⁽²⁾ [Sir C. MacDonald was informed in Tel. No. 96 of July 25, that Lord Lansdowne approved his language.]

No. 143.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 678.

Tel. (No. 96.)

Foreign Office, July 26, 1905.

D. 10:30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 178 ⁽¹⁾ (of July 25).

Hayashi has not yet received instructions.

Your language correctly expresses our views.

Retention of Art[icle] IV which has been recast in deference to Japanese criticism is in our opinion indispensable for reasons mentioned by you.

Art[icle] VII is of less importance, and a note might be substituted for it.

Language of note as to treaty rights might be amended all we desire is that we should not be compelled to go to war say with the U[nited] S[tates] in the event of a violation of established Treaty rights by Japan.

I clearly understood from Hayashi that in such a case, which was not at all likely to arise, they would not think of invoking our aid.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 144.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tôkiô, D. July 28, 1905, 11·35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 179.) Secret.

R. July 29, 12·30 P.M.

Your tel. No. 96 (of July 26. Renewal of Alliance).⁽¹⁾

During my interview with Prime Minister on the 25th.⁽²⁾ I said that the Japanese could hardly expect us to engage in war with a Power or Powers whose established treaty rights had been violated by her,⁽³⁾ and I instanced the United States as being a Power with whom Japan was at present on exceedingly friendly terms. Though I pressed him, Prime Minister avoided giving me a definite answer.

It is possible that present hesitation may be due to misunderstanding, more especially as Minister for Foreign Affairs and foreign adviser have gone to America. It is possible also that Japanese Government may be repenting of their bargain. Now that I know the view of the British Government, I can speak with more confidence.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 153-4, No. 142.]⁽³⁾ [In the first draft of decypher the word "Dependency" appeared after "her" in the place of the comma.]

No. 145.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. Japan 673.

Foreign Office, July 29, 1905.

Tel. (No. 109.)

D. 6 P.M.

We have made considerable progress with the negotiation of new Anglo-Jap[an]ese Agreement. Preamble recites that objects of two Powers are :

"(a.) The consolidation and maintenance of the general peace in the regions of Eastern Asia and of India ;

(b.) The preservation of the common interests of all Powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China ;

(c.) The maintenance of the territorial rights of the High Contracting Parties in the regions of Eastern Asia and of India, and the defence of their special interests in the said regions."

New agreement differs from present Agreement mainly in that contracting parties will come to one another's assistance if either of them is involved in war owing to unprovoked attack even of a single Power.

An important article with regard to Corea is under discussion it runs as follows :—

"Japan possessing paramount political, military and economic interests in Corea, Great Britain recognizes the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance, control and protection in Corea, as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance those interests, provided always that such measures are not contrary to the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations."

This Article to which Japan attaches the utmost importance seems to us in accordance with President's views (see your private tel[egram] of January 23 and my reply, also my tel[egram] of January 28 and your reply).⁽¹⁾

You may communicate this information in strict confidence to the President.

You might call his special attention to (b) in the preamble, which is in close accordance with his policy.

Secret.

From Mr. Loomis' language I gather that Korean article is not likely to be objected to.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. *cp.* the following note, unsigned, which is endorsed "Position of Japan in Corea. Views of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] respecting. Keep with Sir M. Durand Tel. 109, July 29, 1905."

When we were at the beginning of this year discussing with the President of the U[nited] S[tates] the question of the terms of peace he thought "that if Japan continues to withstand Russia she should be permitted to retain Port Arthur and *paramount influence in Corea*" (Sir M. Durand tel[egram], private, of Jan: 23).

In our reply we informed Sir M. Durand that in our view if Japan's success were maintained she would be entitled to insist on retention of Port Arthur and *paramount influence in Corea*. (To Sir M. Durand tel[egram] private of Jan: 25.)

On the 28th of January we telegraphed to Sir M. Durand the conditions of peace which would in the opinion of the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs be indispensable. These included:

(a) Corea to be within the *exclusive sphere of Japanese influence* and no special Russian interests to be allowed within it.

Sir M. Durand was informed that the *terms did not seem to us excessive* and was instructed to communicate the substance of the telegram verbally and in the strictest confidence to the President.

Sir M. Durand informed us on the 30th of January that the President agreed in all points with the views expressed in the telegram of the 25th. He did not think that Russia would agree to the terms suggested by Japan, but *prima facie* saw no objection to these terms.]

No. 146.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

Tôkiô, July 30, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

D. 10:55 A.M.

Tel. (No. 180.) Secret.

R. July 31, 8:30 A.M.

Your tel. No. 96.⁽²⁾ New Alliance.

On receipt of above telegram, I immediately sent a paraphrase of it from the words "Your language" to the end to the Prime Minister, at the same time asking for an interview which was fixed for this afternoon and from which I have just returned.

Prime Minister said that your telegram had very considerably cleared up the situation. Jap[anese] Gov[ernment] were however at a loss to know why the words "infringement of treaty rights of other nations" had been suddenly introduced into Art[icle] 3 and still more why the note which it was proposed to substitute for these words suggested that the Japanese "contemplated the adoption of measures in violation of treaties or infringement of existing treaty rights."⁽³⁾ This had never

⁽¹⁾ [The decypher of this telegram is endorsed: "As several passages are undecypherable we have asked for a repetition." A revised version was therefore telegraphed on August 1. D. 5:30 P.M., R. August 2, 8:30 P.M. The changes are indicated in the footnotes below.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 154, No. 143.]

⁽³⁾ [Revised version has here "contemplated the adoption of measures in violation of established Treaty rights." *v. infra*, p. 166, note ⁽³⁾, and *supra*, p. 151, No. 137, *encl.* 2.]

occurred to the Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t⁽⁴⁾ and they could not understand why we should introduce the subject into the Alliance. I said I had no instructions but I now knew the views held by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and I thought if the Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t telegraphed confidential⁽⁵⁾ ? assurance to Your Lordship, a note might not be necessary or at any rate one in a very modified form. As to why this assurance had been asked for at a rather late stage of the negotiations, I thought that perhaps H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] were not aware that Japan was determined to establish a protectorate until as a result of an interview with Baron Komura the matter had been put before H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] on July 8.⁽⁶⁾ and they thought it would be best to put it clearly on record, that in case of war resulting from a possible wilful ? breach⁽⁷⁾ of treaty rights, the alliance could not be invoked. It was not intended to suggest that Japanese (group omitted) were going to⁽⁸⁾ deliberately violate treaty rights of any power. The Prime Minister seemed satisfied with this explanation. His Excellency said that Japanese were drawing up a further amendment to Your Lordship's revised draft of July 19 which would be telegraphed to Jap[anese] Min[iste]r in London in the course of two or three days. Although Jap[anese] Gov[ernmen]t had no intention of violating any existing treaty (group undecypherable)⁽⁹⁾ it was essential, in interest of peace that steps should be taken to prevent Emperor of Corea and the Corean Gov[ernmen]t from intriguing with Powers and making treaties and agreements in a loose and irresponsible manner. The present war was to a great extent caused by such intrigues with the Russ[ian] Legation. As to Art[icle] IV Prime Min[iste]r said he was well aware of British Parliamentary difficulties and possible opposition and as he wanted to make this alliance acceptable to Parliament, he was considering in case of Art[icle] III (groups undecypherable)⁽¹⁰⁾ Your Lordship's wishes in the Indian frontier article.

As to Art[icle] VII he did not anticipate any difficulty.

MINUTE.

Much more hopeful.

L.

⁽⁴⁾ [In revised version this sentence begins as follows: "His Excellency said that he could assure me that violation of Treaties or infringement of existing Treaty rights had never even occurred to the Japanese Government."]

⁽⁵⁾ ["Confidential" omitted in revised version.]

⁽⁶⁾ [In revised version "on 8th July by me."]

⁽⁷⁾ [Revised version has "violation" instead of "wilful breach."]

⁽⁸⁾ [Revised version of this sentence is identical with this text except that "were going to" becomes "would." "Group omitted" is therefore probably an error.]

⁽⁹⁾ ["Group undecypherable" here proved to be "or infringing Treaty rights." The word "treaty" preceding this should read "treaties."]

⁽¹⁰⁾ [In revised version this line reads "he was considering in case Article III could be arranged, how to meet your Lordship's wishes. . . ."]

No. 147.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 200.) Secret.

My Lord,

Tôkiô, D. July 31, 1905.

R. September 18, 1905.

In my telegram No. 178 of the 25th instant⁽¹⁾ I gave an account of an interview I had with His Excellency the Prime Minister relative to the proposals contained in Your Lordship's telegram No. 94,⁽²⁾ and I stated that I was desired by His Excellency to inform Your Lordship that the said proposals, at any rate in the form on [sic]

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 153-4, No. 142.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 153, No. 141.]

which they were presented, did not meet with the approval of the Japanese Government.

On the 27th, I was greatly gratified to receive Your Lordship's telegram No. 96,⁽³⁾ stating that the language I had used at the above-quoted interview correctly expressed the views of His Majesty's Government.

Your Lordship further stated that Art[icle] IV, with regard to the Indian frontier, had been recast in deference to Japanese criticism, and for the reasons I had given was indispensable; as to the note respecting Treaty Rights, the language might be amended, the sole desire of the British Government being that Great Britain should not be compelled to go to war, say, with the United States, in case Japan violated established Treaty rights.

As to Art[icle] VII respecting the sending of ships and land forces, this Your Lordship thought was of less importance, and a note might be substituted for it.

I immediately sent a paraphrase of Your Lordship's telegram to Count Katsura, stating that I would be very pleased to offer any explanations, should he think them necessary. His Excellency wrote fixing a meeting for the afternoon of Sunday the 30th at his private residence.

On my return from this interview I telegraphed an account of it to Your Lordship at some length, and I have little to add to the information given in that telegram (No. 180 of yesterday's date).⁽⁴⁾ The meeting was much more cordial than the one I had with His Excellency on the 25th instant (my telegram No. 178 and despatch No. 199 secret of the same date⁽⁵⁾), on which occasion I could see that a serious hitch had taken place in the progress of negotiations. This cordiality was undoubtedly due to Your Lordship's telegram which I have quoted, and which Count Katsura said had "considerably cleared up the situation."

The set-back in the negotiations was, I think, due to the proposed insertion by His Majesty's Government in Art[icle] III of an assurance on the part of Japan that the measures which she might take in establishing a Protectorate over Korea would not infringe the Treaty Rights of other nations, and, still more so, to the fact that when, on representations made by the Japanese Government, His Majesty's Government agreed to withdraw this reference; they, the British Government, wished to substitute therefor a note to the effect that it is understood that Art[icle] III does not contemplate adoption of measures on the part of Japan in violation of established Treaty Rights, and that the Japanese Government would not be entitled to call upon His Majesty's Government under the article to come to their assistance in support of such measures.

In my telegram of yesterday's date, a paraphrase of which I have the honour to enclose⁽⁶⁾ I state the reasons for which I thought these stipulations had been suggested at so late a stage of the negotiations, which explanation seemed to satisfy His Excellency. I added that I was quite sure that His Majesty's Government had no intention whatever of implying that the Japanese Government would deliberately violate the Treaty Rights of any Power.

Count Katsura speaking with great earnestness through Mr. Matsui, Chief of the Political Bureau, who, on this occasion, as on the last, was interpreter, said that though the Japanese Government had no intention whatever of infringing the rights of any Power, yet there was a point upon which they must insist. One of the chief causes of the present war was the habit of the Emperor of Korea, and of high Korean officials, of intriguing with Foreign Powers, and of making arrangements and agreements in the most irresponsible manner. This could not be permitted to continue; otherwise all the blood and treasure which Japan had poured out, would have been poured out in vain, for at any moment fresh intrigues would take place, fresh troubles would arise, and the peace of the Far East would never be assured

(3) [v. *supra*, p. 154, No. 143.]

(4) [v. immediately preceding document.]

(5) [Not reproduced. It gives a fuller account of the interview described in Tel. No. 178.]

(6) [Not reproduced.]

Not only, said His Excellency, do the Korean Government intrigue with Russia, but he would inform me confidentially that, within the past few weeks, they had been intriguing with Japan!—a deputation of high officials, members of the Korean Government, having secretly approached Marquis Ito, inviting him to become Governor-General, or, as Mr. Matsui translated it, "Dictator of Korea." Count Katsura said that, but for the fact that Japan was united and Marquis Ito was entirely in accord with the Government, an awkward situation might have been created, whereas it was only amusing, but it showed to what lengths the Korean Government could go. It was, therefore, absolutely essential, added His Excellency, for the peace of the Far East and the future good Government of Korea, that the Emperor and the Korean Ministers should be deprived of their power of causing serious mischief.

When talking of the possible infringement of established Treaty Rights, His Excellency asked me in what way Japan could infringe Treaty rights. I replied that I had heard it mentioned that she might, in Korea, find it convenient to do away with Consular jurisdiction, or make such alterations in the Customs Tariff as would tend to her benefit, and not to that of other Powers. His Excellency assured me that such measures had not even been contemplated, and reminded me that Japan had, after much negotiation, arranged a Customs Tariff with Foreign Powers; also that Consular Jurisdiction had been done away with in Japan, but only after long and careful consideration and negotiations; should Japan ever find it necessary to resort to such changes in Korea, His Majesty's Government might rest assured that the same careful consideration and negotiation would take place with the Powers concerned.

Count Katsura, in conclusion, said that the Japanese Government were drawing up further amendments to Your Lordship's revised draft of July 19th which would be sent to Viscount Hayashi in the course of a few days.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

No. 148.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, August 3, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

D. 2:35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 184.) Secret.

R. 8:30 P.M.

My telegram No. 180 :⁽¹⁾ New Alliance.

Prime Minister has this morning handed me copy of instructions sent to Japanese Representative in London on the evening of 1st August.

With reference to notes regarding Article III to be exchanged after signature of Agreement, said instructions contain the following passage :—

"Japan has no intention to disregard the Treaty rights of other Powers, nor could any such intention be presumed to exist from the wording of the Article. She recognizes the binding force of Corea's existing Treaties.

"In the opinion of the Imperial Government, even the establishment of a Protectorate would not *ipso facto* terminate Treaties of other Powers with Corea, and if any changes become necessary in regard to those Treaty rights, such changes will have to be made only after direct negotiations with the Powers concerned. Imperial Government do not therefore see any necessity for the exchange of the proposed notes." *Passage ends.*

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 156-7, No. 146.]

In face of this most clear and definite declaration, I earnestly hope His Majesty's Government will not press for exchange of the diplomatic notes. Any insistence on this point will create a most deplorable impression here.

Article IV.—Prime Minister has retained this Article in a modified form, which will be submitted to your Lordship by the Japanese Minister. Its retention will have to be explained to the Privy Council and House of Representatives on account of its superfluity, from a Japanese point of view, as they consider this point is sufficiently covered by Preamble and Article II. Count Katsura proposes to say that it was retained to meet wishes of British Government, or he will give any other reason which your Lordship wishes, provided that the reasons given here and to British Parliament are the same.

Japanese Government are unable to agree to the second paragraph of Article VII for reasons which Japanese Minister will give to your Lordship, and which appear to me sound. Prime Minister said: Why tie the hands of military and naval experts in time of war with political conditions?

Count Katsura expressed a very earnest hope that His Majesty's Government would accept the proposal of the Japanese Government, which had been arrived at after very serious consideration.

I do not think that we shall be able to obtain better conditions, and venture to urge their acceptance.

No. 149.

Viscount Hayashi to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 673.

Dear Marquess Lansdowne,

Japanese Legation, August 3, 1905.

I have forgotten to say that after the insertion of the Article VII the wording of the Article VIII viz. "The present agreement shall, subject to the provisions of the preceding Article" should read "The present Agreement shall subject to the Article VI"

I write these lines just to inform your Lordship that I have altered the wording as above.

Yours sincerely,

TADASU HAYASHI.

No. 150.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 134.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 3, 1905.

I had an interview with the Japanese Minister to-day after the meeting of the Cabinet, and informed him—

1. That in deference to the views which he had expressed to me on the occasion of our last interview, we had re-drafted Article IV, which we proposed should run as follows:—

"Great Britain having a special interest in all that concerns the security of the Indian frontier, Japan recognizes her right to take such measures in the proximity of that frontier as she may find necessary for safeguarding her Indian possessions."

Viscount Hayashi told me that he saw no objection to this wording, but that he must telegraph it to the Japanese Government.

2. That in deference to the strong wish expressed by the Japanese Government, we were prepared to omit the concluding sentence, beginning, "It is however—," from Article VII.⁽¹⁾

3. That I had repeated to the Cabinet the statement which he had made to me on the 2nd instant with regard to the proposed Note dealing with the question of established treaty rights, and that my colleagues were content to accept, as a satisfactory settlement of the matter, his statement to me that in the view of the Japanese Government an attack resulting from an attempt by either of the High Contracting Parties to violate established treaty rights would not be regarded by the Japanese Government as an unprovoked attack, or of such a nature as to justify the Party attacked in calling upon the other Party to come to his assistance.

With regard to the question of publication, I said that the Cabinet were of opinion that the publication of the Agreement at a moment when the peace negotiations were on the point of commencing might be regarded as an improper and indefensible proceeding. The Agreement dealt with some questions which must inevitably come before the Plenipotentiaries at Washington, and the Governments concerned might not unreasonably complain if an attempt were made to dispose of those questions by means of an arrangement such as that into which we were about to enter. It is also conceivable that should the peace negotiations unfortunately prove abortive, the responsibility for their failure might, if the Agreement were to be revealed at such a moment, be thrown upon our shoulders. We were therefore of opinion that, supposing it to be signed within the next few days, the fact of the signature should be kept secret. We could not however contemplate that the knowledge of it should be withheld for an indefinite time from the public, and whether the negotiations failed or succeeded it would be necessary to publish the Agreement within a reasonable time. It would be easy for us to confer as to the date which might be selected for this purpose. Viscount Hayashi expressed his personal agreement, and promised to repeat the substance of my remarks to the Japanese Government.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

(¹) [*v. infra*, p. 168, No. 155, note (⁷).]

No. 151.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

(No. 137.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 8, 1905.⁽¹⁾

The Japanese Minister called upon me to-day and made a statement to the following effect with reference to the fourth British draft of the new Anglo-Japanese Agreement:—

The Imperial Government accept the new wording of Article IV as proposed by the British Government. They understand however that the new wording is preferred as being better in point of form, and not because of any essential difference in meaning.

The Imperial Government consent to the proposal that the Agreement should be signed at the end of this week.

They concur in general with the views of the British Government as to the date at which the Agreement might be made public, and deem it advisable to hold the

(¹) [Although dated August 8, this despatch was obviously not sent until August 9 at earliest.]

publication in abeyance until such time as the two Governments are convinced that the Agreement may be made public without prejudicing the success of the peace negotiations about to commence between Japan and Russia.

The Imperial Government thought it desirable that the two Governments should arrive at a previous understanding with a view to harmonising the explanations which they may be called upon to make in regard to the scope and character of the Agreement, especially with regard to Article III and Article IV. It might become necessary for the Imperial Government to give such explanations to the Japanese Privy Council as soon as the Agreement is published. An early understanding upon the point is therefore most desirable.

As to these Articles, the Imperial Government will have no hesitation in declaring, with regard to Article III, that they firmly intend to respect the established treaty rights which other Powers possess in Korea. They desire however to refrain from making in their declaration any reference to the statement made by me to my colleagues to the effect that, in the imaginary case of a war arising from a violation of the established treaty rights of other Powers in Korea by Japan, that war would not be regarded as unprovoked. The Imperial Government deem it highly desirable to keep complete silence upon this point, not only owing to considerations affecting the domestic politics of Japan herself, but in order to ensure full effectiveness for the Agreement.

As to Article IV, the Imperial Government will be prepared if necessary to state that any attack made by a third Power, in consequence of measures taken by Great Britain in the proximity of the Indian frontier in order to safeguard her Indian Possessions, will be considered by Japan as entirely unprovoked within the meaning of Article II, although it is a matter of course that the armed assistance contemplated by Article II will be rendered exclusively in case of a war in defence of the territorial rights of Great Britain in India, as is already set forth in the same Article.

I subsequently wrote to Viscount Hayashi a note of which a copy is attached to this despatch.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Enclosure in No. 151.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Viscount Hayashi.

F.O. Japan 673.

Dear Viscount Hayashi,

Foreign Office, August 9, 1905.⁽²⁾

I laid before my colleagues the substance of the memorandum which you were good enough to leave with me this morning. His Majesty's Government do not consider that the new wording of Article IV is different in meaning from the Japanese draft. As a matter of form, however, we prefer our wording, and we are glad that it is accepted by the Imperial Government.

If convenient to you, I propose that we should sign the Agreement on Saturday next, the 12th.

I am glad to find that the Imperial Government concur with us in believing that the publication of the Agreement would, at the present time, be undesirable. When more is known of the progress of the peace negotiations, it will be possible for us to arrive at a decision as to the moment for publication. Upon this question it will be necessary that we should confer with one another from time to time.

⁽²⁾ [Sic. The letter was written on August 8.]

With regard to the explanations which the Japanese Government proposes to give as to the scope and character of Articles III and IV, His Majesty's Government do not take any exception to the statements contained in your memorandum.

It must of course be clearly understood that it is the actual text of the Agreement which is binding upon the parties. Subject to this, we should welcome the declaration of the Japanese Government that they firmly intend to respect the established treaty rights possessed by other Powers in Korea. It was never our intention that either of the Contracting Parties should gratuitously offer any statement as to the manner in which a violation of the treaty rights of another Power by one of the contracting Parties might be dealt with. All that we desire is that, should either of us be challenged upon this point, we should state that both the Contracting Parties fully recognise the sanctity of established treaty rights, and that if an attack should be made upon one of the Parties in consequence of a violation of such rights by it, such an attack could not be regarded as unprovoked within the meaning of Article II. We have however no desire to raise the point.

As for Article IV, the statement embodied in your note appears to us to be a legitimate account of the combined effect of Articles IV and II and of the Preamble of the Agreement.

Allow me to take this opportunity of offering you my personal congratulations upon the successful conclusion of this important negotiation.

[I have, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

MINUTE.

I agree.

A. J. B.

8 : 8 : 1905.

No. 152.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 100.)

Foreign Office, August 9, 1905.

D. 6 P.M.

Your telegram No. 186 (of 8th August: New Alliance).⁽¹⁾

Japanese Minister communicated yesterday reply of Japanese Government.

I have proposed that we should sign Agreement on 12th instant, and when more is known of progress of peace negotiations arrive at decision regarding publication.

I have informed him that His Majesty's Government do not take exception to proposed explanations as to Articles III and IV, and that it must be understood that it is actual text of Agreement which is binding. Subject to this we should welcome declaration of intention to respect Treaty rights of other Powers in Korea. It was never our intention that either Contracting Party should volunteer statement as to manner in which violation of such rights should be dealt with. All we desire is that if either be challenged on point we should state that both recognize sanctity of established Treaty rights, and that an attack made upon one of them in consequence of violation of such rights could not be regarded as unprovoked within the meaning of Article II.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to the reply of the Japanese Government.]

No. 153.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Tôkiô, August 11, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

Tel. (No. 189.) Secret.

D. 11 A.M.

R. 10.15 A.M.

Your Tel. No. 100.⁽¹⁾

Vice Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] has been to see me to say Japanese Gov[ernment] thoroughly understand and are in accord with wishes of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] as to the explanations to be given, when challenged, of Art[icles] 3 and 4. Japanese Minister in London has been authorized by telegraph to sign tomorrow.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 154.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 672.

Tel. (No. 101.) Secret.

Foreign Office, August 12, 1905.

D. 1.20 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 189 (of 11th inst[ant].)⁽¹⁾

Treaty signed today.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 155.

The Anglo-Japanese Agreement of August 12, 1905.

F.O. Japan 673.

[ED. NOTE.—The main stages in the framing of the Agreement were as follows :—

- (i.) After some preliminary negotiations between representatives of the two Powers, Viscount Hayashi presented a draft on May 10, 1905 for the renewal of the Treaty of January 30, 1902.
- (ii.) On May 26, 1905 Viscount Hayashi presented a draft of a new Treaty, consequent upon an exchange of telegrams on May 18 and 25.
- (iii.) A British Counter-draft was given to Viscount Hayashi by Lord Lansdowne on June 10, 1905, after several drafts had been considered by the British Cabinet.
- (iv.) On June 23, 1905 Viscount Hayashi presented a revised draft.
- (v.) The second British draft was presented to Viscount Hayashi on July 1, 1905.
- (vi.) To meet the criticisms upon the second British draft communicated by Viscount Hayashi on July 14, a third British draft was communicated to him on July 19, 1905.
- (vii.) A fourth British draft was communicated on August 8, 1905,
- (viii.) On August 12, the Treaty was signed.

The Table below shows the final British Counter-draft of June 10, 1905, and the revised Japanese draft of June 23, together with the final text. The various stages in the alterations made in the drafts are shown in footnotes. The use of italics in the British and Japanese drafts indicates identity of wording with the final text.]

FIRST BRITISH COUNTER-
DRAFT OF JUNE 10, 1905.

Preamble.

The Governments of Great Britain and Japan, being desirous of replacing the Agreement concluded between them on the 30th January, 1902, by fresh stipulations, have agreed upon the following Articles, which have for their object—

(a) *The consolidation and maintenance of the general peace in the East;*

(b) *The preservation of the common interests of all Powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China;*

(c) *The maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Possessions of the Contracting Parties in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, and the defence of their special rights and interests in the countries in the proximity of such Possessions:—⁽¹⁾*

ARTICLE I.

It is agreed that whenever, in the opinion of either Great Britain or Japan, any of the interests referred to in the preamble of this Agreement are in jeopardy, the two Governments will communicate with one another fully and frankly, and will con-

JAPANESE REVISED DRAFT
OF JUNE 23, 1905.

Preamble.

The Governments of Japan and Great Britain, being desirous of replacing the Agreement concluded between them on the 30th January, 1902, by fresh stipulations, have agreed upon the following articles, which have for their object—

(a) *The consolidation and maintenance of the general peace in the regions of Eastern Asia and India;*

(b) *The preservation of the common interests of all Powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China;*

(c) *The maintenance of the territorial rights of the high Contracting Parties in the regions of Eastern Asia and India, and the defence of their special interests in the said regions.*

ARTICLE I.

It is agreed that whenever, in the opinion of either Japan or Great Britain, any of the rights and interests referred to in the Preamble of this agreement are in jeopardy, the two Governments will communicate with one another fully and frankly, and will

FINAL TEXT.

Preamble.

The Governments of Great Britain and Japan, being desirous of replacing the Agreement concluded between them on the 30th January, 1902, by fresh stipulations, have agreed upon the following Articles, which have for their object—

(a) The consolidation and maintenance of the general peace in the regions of Eastern Asia and of India;

(b) The preservation of the common interests of all Powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China;

(c) The maintenance of the territorial rights of the High Contracting Parties in the regions of Eastern Asia and of India, and the defence of their special interests in the said regions:—

ARTICLE I.

It is agreed that whenever, in the opinion of either Great Britain or Japan, any of the rights and interests referred to in the preamble of this Agreement are in jeopardy, the two Governments will communicate with one another fully and

⁽¹⁾ [The second British draft (July 1) adopts the wording of the Japanese draft of June 23, which is retained in the later drafts and is identical with the final text.]

sider in common the measures which should be taken to safeguard those interests.⁽¹⁾

consider in common the measures which should be taken to safeguard those menaced rights or interests.

frankly, and will consider in common the measures which should be taken to safeguard those menaced rights or interests.

ARTICLE II.

If in consequence of hostilities due to unprovoked attack, or aggressive action on the part of any other Power or Powers, the rights and special interests of either Party mentioned in section (c) of the preamble should be endangered, the other Contracting Party will at once come to its assistance, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.⁽²⁾

ARTICLE II.

If by reason of unprovoked attack, or aggressive action on the part of any other Power or Powers either contracting party should become involved in war in defence of its rights or interests in the regions defined in the Preamble of this Agreement, the other contracting party will at once come to the assistance of its ally and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

ARTICLE II.

If by reason of unprovoked attack or aggressive action, wherever arising, on the part of any other Power or Powers either Contracting Party should be involved in war in defence of its territorial rights or special interests mentioned in the preamble of this Agreement, the other Contracting Party will at once come to the assistance of its ally, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

ARTICLE III.

The right of Japan to take such measures as she may deem right and necessary in order to safeguard her special political, military, and economical interests in Corea is fully recognized by Great Britain, provided always that such measures do not infringe the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industries of all nations.⁽³⁾

ARTICLE III.

Japan possessing special paramount political, military and economic interests in Corea Great Britain recognizes the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance, control and protection in Corea as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance those interests, provided always that such measures do not infringe the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations.

ARTICLE III.

Japan possessing paramount political, military, and economic interests in Corea, Great Britain recognizes the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance, control, and protection in Corea as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance those interests, provided always that such measures are not contrary to the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations.

ARTICLE IV.

Japan, on the other hand, equally recognizes the

[No such clause.]

ARTICLE IV.

Great Britain having a special interest in all that

⁽¹⁾ [The second British draft (July 1) adopts the wording of the Japanese draft of June 23, which is retained in the later drafts and is identical with the final text.]

⁽²⁾ [The second British draft (July 1) is identical with the final text, except that it has "special interests in the regions mentioned" instead of "special interests mentioned." The third British draft (July 19) is identical with the final text.]

⁽³⁾ [The second British draft (July 1) adopts the wording of the Japanese revised draft of June 23, except that it ends "provided always that such measures do not infringe the Treaty rights of other nations or the principle of equal opportunities for their commerce and industry." The third British draft (July 19) omitted reference to "treaty rights" at the instance of the Japanese Government, and substituted for its inclusion a Note to be exchanged after the signature of the Agreement (v. *supra*, p. 151, No. 137, encl. 2.) The text of the third British draft is identical with that of the final text.]

special interests of Great Britain in the regions adjacent to the *Indian frontier* and her right to take such measures as she may deem proper and necessary in order to safeguard those interests.⁽⁴⁾

concerns the security of the Indian frontier, Japan recognizes her right to take such measures in the proximity of that frontier as she may find necessary for safeguarding her Indian possessions.

ARTICLE V.

The High Contracting Parties agree that neither of them will, without consulting the other, enter into separate arrangements with another Power to the prejudice of the interests above described.⁽⁵⁾

ARTICLE IV.

The high contracting parties agree that neither of them will, without consulting the other, enter into separate arrangements with another Power to the prejudice of the interests described in the Preamble of this agreement.

ARTICLE V.

The High Contracting Parties agree that neither of them will, without consulting the other, enter into separate arrangements with another Power to the prejudice of the objects described in the preamble of this Agreement.

ARTICLE VII.

As regards the present war between Japan and Russia, Great Britain will continue to maintain strict neutrality unless some other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against Japan, in which case Great Britain will come to the assistance of Japan, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with Japan.⁽⁶⁾

ARTICLE V.

As regards the present war between Japan and Russia, Great Britain will continue to maintain strict neutrality unless some other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against Japan, in which case Great Britain will come to the assistance of Japan, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with Japan.

ARTICLE VI.

As regards the present war between Japan and Russia, Great Britain will continue to maintain strict neutrality unless some other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against Japan, in which case Great Britain will come to the assistance of Japan, and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with Japan.

Notes.

(C.)

Subject to the above obligation, the conditions under which armed assistance shall be afforded by either Power to the other in the circumstances men-

Notes.

(B.)

The conditions under which armed assistance shall be afforded by either Power to the other in the circumstances mentioned in the agreement signed this

ARTICLE VII.

The conditions under which armed assistance shall be afforded by either Power to the other in the circumstances mentioned in the present Agreement, and

⁽⁴⁾ [The second British draft (July 1) has wording identical with the first British draft except that it omits "on the other hand, equally" and substitutes "in proximity to" for "adjacent to."]

The third British draft (July 19) is identical with the first, except that it omits "on the other hand, equally," substitutes "in all that concerns the security of the Indian frontier" for "in the regions . . . frontier," has "in the proximity of that frontier" after "measures," and "find necessary" for "deem proper and necessary," and "for safeguarding her Indian possessions" for "in order to safeguard those interests."

The fourth British draft (August 8) is identical with the final text.]

⁽⁵⁾ [The second and later British drafts (July 1, etc.) are identical in wording with the final text.]

⁽⁶⁾ [In the second British draft (July 1) and third British draft (July 19) this is Article VI.]

tioned in the Agreement signed this day, and the means by which such assistance is to be made available, will be arranged by the Naval and Military authorities of the Contracting Parties, who will from time to time consult one another fully and freely upon all questions of mutual interest.⁽⁷⁾

day and the means by which such assistance is to be made available, will be arranged by the naval and military authorities of the contracting Parties, who will from time to time consult one another fully and freely upon all questions of mutual interests.

the means by which such assistance is to be made available, will be arranged by the Naval and Military authorities of the Contracting Parties, who will from time to time consult one another fully and freely upon all questions of mutual interest.

ARTICLE VI.

The present Agreement shall, subject to the provisions of Article VII, come into effect immediately after the date of its signature, and remain in force for ten years from that date.

In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said ten years the intention of terminating it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. But if, when the date fixed for its expiration arrives, either ally is actually engaged in war, the alliance shall, *ipso facto*, continue until peace is concluded.⁽⁸⁾

ARTICLE VI.

The present agreement shall, subject to the provisions of the preceding Article, come into effect immediately after the date of its signature, and remain in force for ten years from that date.

In case neither of the high contracting parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said ten years the intention of terminating it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the high contracting parties shall have denounced it. But if, when the date fixed for its expiration arrives either ally is actually engaged in war, the alliance shall, *ipso facto*, continue until peace is concluded.

ARTICLE VIII.

The present Agreement shall, subject to the provisions of Article VI, come into effect immediately after the date of its signature, and remain in force for ten years from that date.

In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said ten years the intention of terminating it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. But if, when the date fixed for its expiration arrives, either ally is actually engaged in war, the alliance shall, *ipso facto*, continue until peace is concluded.

In faith whereof the Undersigned, duly authorized by their respective Governments, have signed

(7) [The second British draft (July 1) has a Note C identical in wording with Article VII of the final text, except that for "the present Agreement" it has "the Agreement signed this day."]

The third British draft (July 19) has an Article VII identical in wording with the final text, except that it adds the following: "It is, however, understood that the measures agreed upon shall not include any obligation on the part of Japan to send ships out of Asiatic waters for the purpose of affording naval assistance to Great Britain, or any obligation on the part of Great Britain to send troops to the Far East for the purpose of affording military assistance to Japan" *cp.* Note D of July 1, *infra*, note (10).

The fourth British draft (August 8) has an Article VII identical in wording with the final text.]

(8) [The second British draft (July 1) is identical in wording with the Japanese draft of June 23, as is that of July 19. It is Article VII in the draft of July 1, and Article VIII in that of July 19. In the fourth British draft it is identical with the final text.]

this Agreement and have affixed thereto their Seals.

Done in duplicate at London, the 12th day of August, 1905.

(L.S.)

LANSDOWNE

*His Britannic Majesty's
Principal Secretary of
State for Foreign Affairs.*

(L.S.)

TADASU HAYASHI

*Envoy Extraordinary and
Minister Plenipotentiary
of His Majesty the Em-
peror of Japan at the
Court of St. James.*

Notes.

(A.)

After the conclusion of the present war, each of the Contracting Parties will endeavour to maintain at all times available for concentration in the waters of the Far East a naval force superior in strength to that of any European Power in those seas.⁽⁹⁾

(B.)

It is agreed that Japan will, in the event of war, provide and maintain a force which shall be equal to the force of British troops from time to time in India up to a limit of ,000.⁽¹⁰⁾

(⁹) [The second British draft (July 1) adopts the wording of the Japanese draft of June 23. There is no such clause in the third and fourth British drafts.]

(¹⁰) [The second British draft (July 1) is identical in wording with the first, except that it omits "provide and," has "available for service in India" after the first "force," substitutes "not less than" for "equal to," and "maintained from time to time in that country" for "from time to time . . . ,000."]

The second British draft has an additional Note :—

D.

It is, however, agreed that Japan shall not be bound to send ships out of Asiatic waters for the purpose of affording naval assistance to Great Britain, and that Great Britain shall not be bound to send troops to the Far East for the purpose of affording military assistance to Japan.

There is no such clause in the third and fourth British drafts.]

Notes.

(A.)

Each of the contracting parties will endeavour to maintain at all times available for concentration in the waters of the Far East a naval force superior in strength to that of any European Power in those seas.

[No such clause.]

No. 156.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. Japan 672.

Foreign Office, August 12, 1905.

Tel. (No. 102.)

D. 1'30 P.M.

Secret. Your tel[egram] No. 191 (of 11th inst[ant]).⁽¹⁾

Prime Minister may rest assured that we shall spare no pains to avoid being drawn into any statement which might impair usefulness of alliance.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It states the hope of the Japanese Government that a situation which would necessitate the statement given in the last paragraph of Lord Lansdowne's telegram No. 100 (*v. supra*, p. 163, No. 152), may be avoided, as it might impair the effectiveness of alliance for peace.]

No. 157.

*Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Lenox, August 12, 1905.*

F.O. Japan 672.

D. 2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 87.)

R. 9'30 P.M.

Your tel. No. 101 to Sir C. MacDonald.⁽¹⁾

When you think it desirable that I should inform President please telegraph in that sense.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

*I presume soon?**E.R.*⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 164, No. 154.]

No. 158.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. Japan 672.

Foreign Office, August 16, 1905.

Tel. (No. 116.)

D. 7 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] No. 87.

I am most anxious to show the President that we trust him completely, but can we be quite sure that the secret would be kept. I must leave it to your discretion to decide whether you can safely impart this important intelligence to him for his personal information only and under pledge of absolute secrecy.

No. 159.

*Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**St. Petersburg, September 2, 1905.*

F.O. Japan 672.

D. 4'20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 161.) Secret.

R. 6 P.M.

My private letter of Aug[ust] 16.

I think that it would be politic and would produce a good effect if before the publication of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty I were authorized to communicate its text to the Russian Gov[ernment] with an assurance of its unaggressive and purely defensive intent. I should like to be able at the same time to express the desire on

the part of Y[our] L[ordship] to resume the negotiations for an Agreement which were interrupted by the war. I anticipate that such an offer would receive a warm welcome since even yesterday in reply to my congratulations. I received a private note from C[oun]t Lamsdorff in which he said "I hope also that peace will aid powerfully our efforts tending to a loyal and sincere *rapprochement* of our countries and that nothing should prevent an understanding for their reciprocal good."

MINUTE.

I had anticipated this suggestion. v. also my private letter to him in the pouch which left this morning; and my telegram, (copy sent herewith).⁽¹⁾

L.

(¹) [*v. infra*, p. 172, No. 164, and *Ed. note.*]

No. 160.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Barrington.

F.O. Japan 672.

My dear Eric,

Derreen, September 2, 1905.

I wish we had thought a little earlier in the day of the reassuring despatch which I am to write to Hardinge and Bertie about the new Treaty.

Here I am without a blessed document to work upon and obliged to trust to my bad memory.

The enclosed draft is only a rough outline. I have kept a copy and will touch it up as soon as I receive the necessary papers from you, and the office must also do what it can to lick the draft into shape.

Your original suggestion that we should not publish officially until the Treaty has been signed, was, I think, sound, and some days will no doubt pass before that event takes place.

Meanwhile I gather from yesterday's Irish papers that London papers have virtually got the whole thing. This rather forces our hand, but I don't know that it much matters, or obliges us to publish prematurely.

The reassuring despatch ought to be seen by Balfour, and we must send it to him as soon as we possibly can.

You can at the proper moment telegraph to Ponsonby that we intend to publish, and also to communicate the new Treaty to Powers with a few reassuring explanations. I don't think H.M. will want to see the text.

I should say that the despatch might be a circular to all the Great Powers—what does the office think.

Y[our]s,
L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 161.

Sir E. Barrington to Viscount Hayashi.

F.O. Japan 672.

Dear Viscount Hayashi,

September 2, 1905.

I hear this morning from Lord Lansdowne⁽¹⁾ that he thinks it would be better to wait until the Treaty of Peace is signed, before publishing the Anglo-Japanese Treaty; so there is no question of hurry about its publication.

Y[our]s v[ery] sincerely,
E[RIC] B[ARRINGTON].

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 162.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Campbell.

F.O. Japan 672.

Mr. Campbell,

Derreen, September 3, 1905.

I think the best plan will be that we should communicate an advance copy of the new agreement to (1) Russia, (2) France, (3) the U[nited] S[tates].

I am rather in the dark as to the probable date of publication. We ought not I think to publish until the Treaty of Portsmouth has been signed. This cannot be for a few days. Meanwhile, as soon as the draft circular has been settled, we can send it to Hardinge. Bertie and Durand to be communic[ate]d the moment we instruct them to do so.

L[ANSDOWNE].

3/9.

No. 163.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Campbell.

F.O. Japan 672.

Tel.

Derreen, September 4, 1905.

D. 11:50 A.M.

R. 12:22 P.M.

We might add to my draft a paragraph authorizing the Ambassador to intimate that there are no secret articles.

No. 164.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.*F.O. Japan 672.⁽¹⁾

Tel. (No. 384.)

Foreign Office, September 4, 1905.

D. 7 P.M.

Your telegram No. 161, Secret.⁽²⁾

I entirely agree. I had already written to you suggesting that text of Treaty should be communicated to the Russian Government, together with explanatory despatch, before publication.

I had also written to you privately in the same sense.

(¹) [Also in F.O. Embassy Archives, Russia, 181/849; endorsed R. September 5.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 170-1, No. 159.]

[ED. NOTE.—Lord Newton has shown the Editors the draft of this private letter. It merely states that Russia should not be offended at the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which had no aggressive purpose, and that England could work with Russia for the good of the civilised world, "as we are doing at this moment in Macedonia and in Crete," in other directions as well.

A similar personal letter was written to Count Benckendorff on the 4th. It reached him on the 8th, with a copy of the renewed Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which was thus sent to him before publication.]

Mr. Campbell to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Japan 672.

Tel.

Foreign Office, September 5, 1905.

I would only suggest omission in parag[raph] 7 of draft of words "as well as from chronic misgovernment." They seem hardly necessary and will hurt feelings of Korea.

As regards addition of paragraph stating there are no secret Articles, this might, I think, be a separate instruction and not published. Otherwise on future occasions absence of such a statement may give rise to comment.

[ED. NOTE.—The following despatch is a printed copy dated September 6, from F.O. Embassy Archives, France, 146/3837. It was sent unsigned to Sir F. Bertie in this form on the 7th, and in his despatch to Lord Lansdowne of September 9 (No. 333), Sir F. Bertie acknowledges its receipt on the 8th, and says he communicated it to M. Rouvier the same evening.

As will be seen below in No. 168 Lord Lansdowne made an addition and correction to this No. 166 by telegram on September 8, viz., adding "and" before "its inability to stand alone," and deleting "and the danger arising from its weakness." Sir F. Bertie received this telegram at 4:30 P.M. on the 8th, and mentions in his despatch of the 9th that he got M. Rouvier to make the corrections himself on the 8th. The text of No. 166 here following is therefore a printed copy giving the version received by Sir F. Bertie on the 8th. The subsequent corrections were made in ink on the copy in accordance with the directions given in No. 168.

This copy omits both the passage about "geographical limits" (*v. note* ⁽¹⁾ below and *note* ⁽²⁾ on p. 174) and also that about "chronic misgovernment" (*v. note* ⁽³⁾ on p. 174). It is probably the same as that sent the same day to Sir Charles Hardinge, but this also has perished or been lost. The final version sent to Sir F. Bertie with all the corrections embodied in it,

⁽¹⁾ [As shewn above (No. 160) the first draft of the despatch referred to in this telegram was sent by Lord Lansdowne from Derreen on September 2. A revised form was sent by him on the 3rd and reached the Foreign Office by the 5th. As seen here Mr. Campbell then proposed to omit the phrase "as well as from chronic misgovernment," to which Lord Lansdowne had assented by the 6th. On the previous day, the 5th, however, Mr. Campbell wrote privately to Sir Charles Hardinge, sending him by bag a copy of the despatch explaining that "it is not finally settled." It is rather difficult to know what this copy contained, as the draft in F.O. Japan 672 is confused, and the Embassy Archives, Russia, F.O. 181/849, are damaged and this despatch with many other papers is missing. But an explanatory private telegram by Mr. Campbell has been preserved, cancelling a paragraph of the draft.

Mr. Campbell to Sir C. Hardinge.

Embassy Archives Russia.

F.O. 181/849.

(Unnumbered.)

Foreign Office, D. September 7, 1905.

R. September 8, 1905.

I sent you by bag copy of explanatory desp[atch] about Anglo-Japanese Agreement for communication to R[ussian] G[overnment].

Lord Lansdowne now telegraphs to me that paragraph 6 commencing "the geographical" and ending "Contracting Parties themselves" is to be omitted and that with this omission the despatch may be issued at once.

He also directs that the desp[atch] be published on Monday provided we are sure that it will before then have been communicated to R[ussian] G[overnment].

Please therefore make the communication with above omission and telegraph at once when you have done so. We will not publish until we receive your telegram. Signed copy will be sent to you on Saturday by post.

The full text of the passage thus desired to be omitted is here printed in italics (it originally came before the word "Article III" in the text in No. 166): "*The geographical limits within which such co-operation may take place and the nature of that co-operation are questions that must be for the decision of the Contracting Parties themselves.*"

The copy of the despatch referred to in the above telegram was communicated to Count Lamsdorff by Sir C. Hardinge on the 8th; the later amendments, described in No. 168. *infra*, p. 175, were not added until the 9th.]

and signed by Lord Lansdowne, is in the Embassy volume. It is identical with the text followed in No. 166 except that the corrections required by the telegram of the 8th are entered on it.

The despatch, with the text of the Treaty, was published on September 27, 1905. They are not in *A. & P.* 1905 but in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVI, (*Cd.* 2690), pp. 313-8. They are also both in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 98, (1909), pp. 136-40.]

No. 166.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Embassy Archives, France, 146/3887.

(No. 588.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 6, 1905.

I inclose, for Your Excellency's information, a copy of a new Agreement concluded between His Majesty's Government and that of Japan in substitution for that of the 30th January, 1902. You will take an early opportunity of communicating the new Agreement to the French Government.

It was signed on the 12th August, and you will explain that it would have been immediately made public but for the fact that negotiations had at that time already commenced between Russia and Japan, and that the publication of such a document whilst those negotiations were still in progress would obviously have been improper and inopportune.

The Russian Government will, I trust, recognise that the new Agreement is an international instrument to which no exception can be taken by any of the Powers interested in the affairs of the Far East. You should call special attention to the objects mentioned in the preamble as those by which the policy of the Contracting Parties is inspired. His Majesty's Government believe that they may count upon the good-will and support of all the Powers in endeavouring to maintain peace in Eastern Asia, and in seeking to uphold the integrity and independence of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in that country.

On the other hand, the special interests of the Contracting Parties are of a kind upon which they are fully entitled to insist, and the announcement that those interests must be safeguarded is one which can create no surprise, and need give rise to no misgivings.

I call your especial attention to the wording of Article II, which lays down distinctly that it is only in the case of an unprovoked attack made on one of the Contracting Parties by another Power or Powers, and when that Party is defending its territorial rights and special interests from aggressive action, that the other Party is bound to come to its assistance.⁽²⁾

Article III, dealing with the question of Corea, is deserving of especial attention. It recognizes in the clearest terms the paramount position which Japan at this moment occupies and must henceforth occupy in Corea, and her right to take any measures which she may find necessary for the protection of her political, military and economic interests in that country. It is, however, expressly provided that such measures must not be contrary to the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of other nations. The new Treaty no doubt differs at this point conspicuously from that of 1902. It has, however, become evident that Corea, owing to its close proximity to the Japanese Empire, its inability to stand alone, and the danger arising from its weakness,⁽³⁾ must fall under the control and tutelage of Japan.

⁽¹⁾ [Also to Sir C. Hardinge as No. 251.]

⁽²⁾ [The paragraph beginning "The geographical limits . . ." referred to above in the note to No. 165 came here in the first draft sent to Sir C. Hardinge on the 5th. It was cancelled as the result of a suggestion from Mr. Balfour. On September 6, Mr. Campbell telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne "Prime Minister entirely approves draft, except that he wishes to omit paragraph six."]

⁽³⁾ [In Lord Lansdowne's draft of September 3 the words "as well as from chronic misgovernment" occurred here. They were deleted before the draft was sent to Sir C. Hardinge as the result of an exchange of telegrams between Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Campbell (*v. supra*, p. 173, No. 165). For the further deletion of the words "and the danger arising from its weakness," *v. infra*, p. 175, No. 168.]

His Majesty's Government observe with satisfaction that this point was readily conceded by Russia in the Treaty of Peace recently concluded with Japan, and they have every reason to believe that similar views are held by other Powers with regard to the relations which should subsist between Japan and Corea.

His Majesty's Government venture to anticipate that the Alliance thus concluded, designed as it is with objects which are purely peaceful and for the protection of rights and interests the validity of which cannot be contested, will be regarded with approval by the Government to which you are accredited. They are justified in believing that its conclusion may not have been without effect in facilitating the settlement by which the war has been so happily brought to an end, and they earnestly trust that it may, for many years to come, be instrumental in securing the peace of the world in those regions which come within its scope.

[I am, &c.
LANSDOWNE.]

No. 167.

Sir E. Barrington to Viscount Hayashi.

F.O. Japan 672.

My dear Minister,

Foreign Office, September 7, 1905.

Lord Lansdowne wishes me to let you know that our Ambassadors at St. Petersburg and Paris will be instructed to communicate advance copies of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement to the Governments concerned in the course of to-morrow. We propose to publish it in all newspapers on Monday morning. This will I hope meet the views of the Japanese Government.

I am, &c.
ERIC BARRINGTON.

No. 168.

Mr. Campbell to Sir F. Bertie and Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Japan 672.

Tel.

Foreign Office, September 8, 1905.

D. 1 P.M.

Lord Lansdowne's despatch respecting Anglo-Japanese Agreement.⁽¹⁾

In paragraph 6 beginning "Article 3" Lord Lansdowne wishes words "and the danger arising from its weakness" omitted, and word "and" inserted before "its inability."

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 173-4, *Ed. note*, and No. 166, *note* (3).]

No. 169.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Japan 672.

Tel. (No. 116.)

Foreign Office, September 8, 1905.

D. 1.15 P.M.

My despatch No. 588 of Sept[ember] 6. Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

You can state that Agreement is complete as it stands and that there are no secret articles or notes attached to it.

(1) [Also to Sir C. Hardinge as No. 339.]

No. 170.

*Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**St. Petersburg, September 8, 1905*

F.O. Japan 672.

D. 7:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 168.)

R. 9:30 P.M.

Your despatch No. 251.

I communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day copy of your despatch, and gave him the text of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. I read to him at the same time some extracts from your private letter of 4th September,⁽¹⁾ and did my utmost to reassure him as to the absolute sincerity of His Majesty's Government in their desire to live on friendly terms with Russia and in their harbouring no aggressive designs against her.

Count Lamsdorff did not read Treaty in my presence, and abstained from any comments of its contents, but he thanked me warmly for communicating the text of the Treaty, which he said he would transmit to the Emperor without delay. He reiterated his desire for friendly relations between England and Russia, but remarked that there were certain people who wished to prevent them, and that a certain personage had already been to him to point out that Treaty was directed against Russia with hostile intent.

I conclude that he referred to the German Ambassador. I remarked that I felt certain that, after studying the terms of the Treaty and the explanatory despatch which I had communicated to him, he would be convinced of the pacific intentions of His Majesty's Government and of their most earnest desire for the maintenance of peace throughout the world.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 172, *Ed. note.*]

No. 171.

*Sir F. Bertie to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Paris, September 8, 1905.*

F.O. Japan 672.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 58.)

R. 9:30 P.M.

Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

I carried out this evening instructions contained in your despatch No. 588 and your telegrams Nos. 116⁽¹⁾ and 117.⁽²⁾ Minister for Foreign Affairs promised to treat communications as secret. He said that he did not see anything in the Agreement to which France could take exception. He remarked that with regard to Article 2, that "unprovoked attack" might be difficult to interpret in some cases.

He noticed the omission of any mention of Persia, press having stated that it was covered by Agreement. He did not suppose that Russia would like Agreement. On my suggesting that there was nothing hostile to Russia unless she desired to disturb us in India, and that perhaps existence of Agreement might help to facilitate matters in discussion between Russian and British Governments, Minister for Foreign Affairs said that French Government would be very glad if they could be of service in bringing the two Governments together, and that he thought that on the whole Russia would perhaps see not so very much to object to.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 174-5, No. 166, and p. 175, No. 169.]

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 172 (a).

Sir F. Bertie to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 672.

(No. 333.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Paris, D. September 9, 1905.

R. September 12, 1905.

I had the honour to receive yesterday the despatch of the sixth instant, in which your Lordship forwarded to me a copy of the new agreement concluded between his Majesty's Government and that of Japan, and gave me directions as to the explanations and observations by which the communication of the agreement to the French Government was to be accompanied.

I had an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday evening for the purpose of carrying out your Lordship's instructions.

I found that M. Rouvier had just received from the French Embassy in London French translations of a letter from your Lordship to the Ambassador, of the agreement, and of your despatch to me. His Excellency therefore read out the French translations of the despatch and the agreement, whilst I held the original text received from your Lordship.

At my request M. Rouvier struck out of the French translation the rendering of the words which your Lordship's telegram of the 8th instant had directed me to remove from your despatch, viz., "and the danger arising from its weakness."

His Excellency had been led from newspaper statements to suppose that Persia would be mentioned in the agreement, and on this point I reminded him that the policy of his Majesty's Government in regard to that country was well known from the statements made in Parliament by your Lordship.

The only criticism which M. Rouvier made on the text of the agreement was that "unprovoked attack" in article 2 might be difficult to interpret in some cases.

His Excellency asked me to thank your Lordship for the communication which you had directed me to make to him. He said that he did not see anything in the agreement to which France could take exception; that Russia could not be expected to like it; and on my suggesting that there was nothing in it hostile to her unless she desired to disturb us in India, and that it might even help to simplify matters in discussion between the Russian and British Governments, M. Rouvier said that the French Government would be very glad indeed if they could be of service in bringing the two Governments together. Finally he said that perhaps, on the whole, Russia might not see so much to object to.

I gave to his Excellency the assurance desired by your Lordship's telegram No. 116 of yesterday that the agreement is complete as it stands and that there are no secret articles or notes attached to it.

I left with M. Rouvier copies of your Lordship's despatch and the agreement. I told him that the date of publication had not yet been settled, and he promised to treat the documents as secret.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Embassy Archives, Russia, 181/857.

(No. 536.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, September 9, 1905.

Immediately upon the receipt of Mr. Campbell's telegram of the 7th inst[ant]⁽²⁾ requesting me to communicate at once to Count Lamsdorff the text of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement together with the explanatory despatch which I had received yesterday morning by bag messenger, with the omission of the sixth paragraph, I called upon H[is] E[xc]cellency and communicated to him the text of both documents. I read to him at the same time a few sentences from Y[our] L[ordship]'s private letter to me of the 4th Sept[ember]⁽³⁾ which I thought particularly fitting to the occasion and likely to convince him of Y[our] L[ordship]'s friendly intentions and of the very sincere desire of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to maintain harmonious relations with Russia in Asia and elsewhere.

I drew Count Lamsdorff's special attention to the objects of the Agreement as set forth in the preamble and while ~~main~~ remarking that the ~~maintenance~~ preservation of peace and of the principle of the open door were motives which I felt certain would appeal to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t as being in accordance with their own aims, the maintenance of the territorial rights of Great Britain and Japan, and their defence of their special interests in Eastern Asia and India could only be regarded as an insurance of their possessions and rights against unprovoked aggression as was clearly shown by the text of the agreement, and constituted a measure which every far-seeing Gov[ernmen]t would be justified in taking to secure the peaceful enjoyment of their rights and privileges without harbouring any aggressive designs against a third or other Powers. The ~~conviction~~ belief of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] that the ~~existence~~ conclusion of this agreement may not have been without effect in facilitating a settlement of the war now happily closed should be an additional reason to cause the R[ussian] Gov[ernmen]t to view its existence with approval and satisfaction and the fact that the policy of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and that of the Mikado would in future be homogeneous should be regarded as a guarantee against any ideas, such as had been attributed to Japan, of aggressive intentions ~~against~~ towards the possessions of other Powers in the Far East, and should serve to lay for a long time to come the ghost of the "Yellow Peril" which had been conjured up during the past few years but which never had been seriously accepted in England as a danger to the civilisation of the white races. I ~~impressed upon~~ C[oun]t endeavoured to the utmost of my ability to convince C[oun]t L[amsdorff] of the absolute sincerity of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in their desire for peace and for friendly relations and to assured [*sic*] him that they have no desire to interfere with the legitimate activity of Russia nor to seek a policy of aggrandisement at her expense.

C[oun]t L[amsdorff] whose knowledge of English is very limited, read neither the agreement nor the explanatory despatch in my presence but he thanked me warmly for the communication which I had made to him which ~~he said~~ he would transmit to the Emperor without delay. He said that he had already received many contradictory reports as to the existence of such an agreement and as to the nature of its contents and he was glad that all doubts would now be set ~~on on~~ aside. He remarked that I was well aware of his friendly sentiments and of his desire for good relations between our countries and that he and I should now work strenuously together to remove all these points of dissension which in his opinion were based solely on unreasoning prejudice. There were certain people who wished to prevent the realisation of a state

⁽¹⁾ [The draft, not the original, is here reproduced as having some interesting corrections. The original is in F.O. Japan 672.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 173, No. 165, note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 172, *Ed. note.*]

of affairs so much to be desired and to the mutual advantage of both countries, and he could tell me conf[identially] that a certain personage had already been to him to question him about the Treaty and to point out to him that such an agreement could only be directed against Russia and with a hostile intent.

It was evident to me that C[oun]t L[amsdorff] referred to the German Ambassador who, I hear, has shown great activity in searching for information as to the text and purport of the agreement and came a few days ago to question me on the subject.

I told C[oun]t L[amsdorff] that Y[our] L[ordship] proposed to publish very soon the text of the agreement and that I felt convinced that on its publication the pacific intentions of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and their earnest desire for the maintenance of peace throughout the world would be generally recognised. I added that I felt confident that after a study of the terms of the agreement he would share the same views.

I considered that I ~~was~~ would be hardly justified by Y[our] L[ordship's] tel[egram] No. 334 of the 4th Sept[ember] and your letter of the same date⁽⁴⁾ in expressing a desire on your part to resume the negotiations for an agreement which ~~were~~ had been interrupted by the war, but in the course of a somewhat protracted conversation I alluded casually to the possibility of their being resumed at a future date, and C[oun]t Lamsdorff at once replied that he was most anxious that they should be brought to a successful issue but that they should not be unduly hastened.

In deprecating a too early renewal of negotiations there is much to be said in favour of C[oun]t L[amsdorff]'s opinion as such an agreement to be of advantage, must be based on public opinion, and there is so much in in [*sic*] the recent development of the political situation in the Far and Middle East to which Russian public opinion has yet to become reconciled that any attempt at further change in the near future might, ~~if initiated~~, possibly defeat its own object.

There is no doubt that there will be an outcry in the organs of the Anglophile and ~~reactionary~~ Chauvinist press such as the "Novoe Vremya" and the "Moskovski Vedomosti" when the terms of the treaty are published, since in the comments which have already appeared on the incomplete versions of the treaty published in the Agency telegrams ill-humour is shown at the recognition of the fact that threats of the invasion of India will in future be futile, and that "the sword of Damocles which Russia has hitherto held against England, now falls from her grasp." There is, however, every reason to hope that Russian statesmen and the more rational section of Russian public opinion, who are weary of a policy of adventure which has brought only defeat and humiliation in its train, will not not [*sic*] be slow to recognise that the new agreement contains no provision to which Russia or any other Power with peaceful aspirations can reasonably take exception.

[I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.]

(4) [*v. supra*, p. 172, No. 164, and *Ed. note.*]

No. 173.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. Japan 672.

Tel. (No. 143.)

(Anglo-Japanese Agreement.)

Foreign Office, September 10, 1905.

D. 10 A.M.

I trust no offence has been given to the President owing to concealment of the fact that we had signed Agreement on 12th August. You might, perhaps, explain to him that while we had supplied him with timely information as to the contents of the

Agreement, it was thought more convenient that, whilst the negotiations were proceeding, the fact of signature having taken place should remain undisclosed; but you can judge better than I whether such a communication is desirable.

No. 174.

Viscount Hayashi to Sir E. Barrington.

F.O. Japan 672.

Dear Sir Eric,

4, Grosvenor Gardens, September 10, 1905.

I have just received an answer from my government to my telegram concerning the date of publishing our new agreement.

From the reports received through different sources Japanese government learn that the war party in Russia has again gained ascendancy in St. Petersburg and loudly express dissatisfaction against the treaty of peace and if the agreement is published, they fear that it will give additional pretext to the war party in protesting against the conclusion of peace more strongly. Under the circumstance, the Japanese Government desire very much that the publication of agreement be postponed until the ratification of the treaty.

I am, therefore, instructed to request Lord Lansdowne that he will see the way to comply with the desire of the Japanese government.

Hoping you will communicate the above to His Lordship at the earliest opportunity.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

TADASU HAYASHI.

No. 175.

Mr. Campbell to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 672.

Lord Lansdowne,

Foreign Office, September 10, 1905.

The King sent for me this evening, and gave me the enclosed memo[randum] for you by Baron Wedel which had been sent to him by Princess Charles.

H[is] Majesty seemed fairly easy in his mind as to the turn things were taking and said more than once he thought P[rin]ce Charles' candidature fairly safe, or rather implied this.

He quite agrees with Y[our] L[ordship] as to non-intervention by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment].

His Majesty also desired me to tell you that he had met C[oun]t Benckendorff at luncheon today and that the latter was very pleased at the communication of the Anglo-Japanese treaty. As regards publication and the Japanese objections he asked, "What will L[or]d Lansdowne do?"

I said I was not sure but that I thought the possible course would be to wait some days and in the meantime to ask Hardinge what foundation there was for the fear that the war party in Russia were gaining the upper hand and that if we were assured that it was not the case we might then return to the charge with the Japanese. H[is] M[ajesty] said he thought this a good idea.

As regards Johnstone's telegram Sir T. Sanderson will no doubt see M. Nansen tomorrow and report.

I am writing in a great hurry to catch the train.

F. A. C.

No. 176.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 672.

Lenox, D. September 11, 1905.

Tel. (No. 103.)

R. September 12, 1905, 7-15 A.M.

Your telegram No. 143 (Anglo-Japanese Treaty).⁽¹⁾

I have no reason to suppose that any offence has been given. President writes to me that he has no doubt that the signing of the Treaty was a powerful factor in inducing Japan to be wise and reasonable as to terms. His letter is quite pleasant in tone. I have not received actual text of the Treaty.

(1) [v. *supra*, pp. 179-80, No. 173.]

No. 177.

Note by Mr. Campbell.

F.O. Japan 672.

Foreign Office, September 18, 1905.

Count Bernstorff called to say that he had received a telegram from Berlin instructing him to convey to you the warm thanks of the German Gov[ernmen]t for the Conf[idential] communication of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

F. A. C.

No. 178.

Viscount Hayashi to Mr. Campbell.

F.O. Japan 672.

Confidential.

My dear Mr. Campbell,

Japanese Legation, September 18, 1905.

I am just in receipt of a telegram from Count Katsura instructing me to express to the Marquess of Lansdowne the grateful acknowledgement of the country which has prompted His Majesty's Government to consent to defer, to a later date, the publication of the new alliance Agreement in compliance with the request of the Imperial Government.

Further, I am directed to add for the information of the Marquess the following matter. Being in possession of reports to the effect that there is a misunderstanding prevailing in the official circles as well as among the people of Germany regarding the objects of the new treaty which they regard as not to be compatible with the established rights of Germany in the Far East the Imperial Government have caused their representative in Berlin to communicate to Prince Bülow the text of the Agreement. Count Inouye has, at the same time, been instructed to explain to the Prince the true aims of the treaty for which it has been concluded.

Yours sincerely,
TADASU HAYASHI.

Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Japan 672.
(No. 244.)
My Lord,

Tôkiô, September 21, 1905.

At an interview I had this afternoon with the Prime Minister I pressed His Excellency on the subject of the publication of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, which had been signed in London on the 12th of last month.

I reminded Count Katsura that Your Lordship, telegraphing on the 12th September, had consented to postpone the publication of the Alliance at the special request of the Japanese Government for a fortnight, and this limit would expire on the 26th or 27th.

His Excellency said that, as I knew, the publication of the new agreement, which the Japanese Government proposed to carry out immediately after the signing of the Peace Treaty, had been deferred on the advice of Baron Komura until the Treaty could be ratified (my telegram to Your Lordship of the 8th inst.), and subsequently, on account of the information which the Japanese Government had received from Russia, and which had appeared in the papers, to the effect that the military party in Russia were very discontented with the Peace terms and were urging the Emperor not to ratify the Treaty; but, the information which I had been good enough to convey to him on the 16th inst., to the effect that in St. Petersburg there was no indication whatever of any intention or desire on the part of the Russian Government or the War Party to prevent ratification, coming as it did from so high an authority as Sir C. Hardinge, had decided the Japanese Government not to wait for the arrival of the actual Peace Treaty, which was not due till the 6th October, but to make arrangements if possible, to ratify a copy which had been telegraphed from Washington. These arrangements, he hoped, would be completed by the 26th or 27th inst., when the Anglo-Japanese agreement would be made public. I asked His Excellency whether, in case the arrangements he spoke of were not completed on the date mentioned, the publication of the agreement would be still further delayed. Count Katsura replied that he did not think there would be any further delay, thanks to the reassuring information given by Sir C. Hardinge.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

Viscount Hayashi to Mr. Campbell.

F.O. Japan 672.

Dear Mr. Campbell,

4, Grosvenor Gardens, September 24, 1905.

I have just received a telegram from my Government saying that they are now prepared to publish the Alliance Agreement on Wednesday the 27th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾ if that date is agreeable to His Majesty's Government. As the Imperial Government are expecting the answer to the above telegram in time, I shall be much obliged if you will be good enough to let me know the decision of His Majesty's Government on the matter as soon as possible.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

TADASU HAYASHI.

⁽¹⁾ [The text of the Treaty and the covering despatch were both published in September 27, *v. supra*, p. 174, *Ed. note.*]

CHAPTER XXV.

GENERAL ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1903-7.

I.—THE FIRST STAGE OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN
RAPPROCHEMENT, 1903-4.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The negotiations leading up to the Anglo-Russian Entente are here generally indicated. The more specific problems of Thibet, Persia, and Afghanistan are dealt with in separate and subsequent chapters.

The report of Sir Charles Hardinge's conversation given in No. 181 (b) below, is a copy of Sir Charles Hardinge's letter, preserved in the Embassy Archives. The original is not in the records, and it is not possible to tell whether the marginal markings and underlinings are by Lord Lansdowne or Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. All except one are in red ink, and might therefore be assumed to be by the Foreign Secretary, but some Ambassadors (*e.g.*, Sir F. Bertie) were in the habit of using red ink in commenting on documents in their own archives. Though endorsed "Russo-Afghan affairs" the letter really deals with all Anglo-Russian relations, and represents the origin of those ideas of *rapprochement* which were interrupted by the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. It should be compared carefully with Lord Lansdowne's conversation of October 26, 1903, with M. Paul Cambon (*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, pp. 217-8, No. 250) and with the despatch of November 17 immediately below.]

No. 181 (a).

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. China 1747.

(No. 830.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 17, 1903.

. . . . (1) I then asked His Excellency whether he was able to make any proposals to me as to the most convenient way of examining the other questions which he had been authorized by Count Lamsdorff to discuss with me. He did not seem to have any specific suggestions to make. He said the questions to which I referred seemed naturally to group themselves into (1) questions concerning China in which Russia had a special interest (2) questions concerning India, in which Great Britain had a special interest and (3) questions concerning Persia in which both Powers were interested. He let fall the observation that the Russian Government did not favour any arrangement which would place Northern Persia under Russia and Southern Persia under British influence, but they recognized our predominance in the Persian Gulf, although they would probably require a commercial *débouché* in those waters.

I observed that an arrangement upon the lines thus indicated did not seem to me to present any particular advantages for us, and I asked whether the commercial outlet involved the acquisition of a harbour and a strategic base. Count Benckendorff replied decidedly in the negative.

After the exchange of a few desultory remarks in regard to Manchuria and Afghanistan I asked His Excellency whether it would not be possible for him to put upon paper as a basis for our discussion his own views as to the different questions at issue. He said that he feared he had not sufficient materials at the Embassy to enable him to do this.

I asked him whether he had any authority to make specific proposals as to any of these questions.

He replied that he had no authority to do so but that he was instructed to discuss them with me ("d'en causer avec vous").

(1) [The first part of this despatch deals with Thibet and is quoted in ch. XXVI, pp. 306-7, No. 289.]

As I was unable to prolong the conversation it was decided that we should meet again.

From the want of precision of His Excellency's language and ideas I am disposed to think that our discussions are not likely to have much result.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 181 (b).

Mr. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Russo-Afghan Relations: Mr. Hardinge's Conv[ersation] with C[ount] Benckendorff.

F.O. Embassy Archives, Russia, 181/793.
My dear Lord Lansdowne,

Windsor Castle,

Sunday, November 22, 1903.

I had a very long talk with C[oun]t Benckendorff this afternoon on the many points at issue between us and the Russian Gov[ernment]t. and, although our conversation was quite informal, I think it has thrown some light on Russian aspirations and on the question as to how far the Russian Gov[ernment]t will go to meet our views.

I spoke to him very plainly and showed him that although our policy in Asia had for many years had in view the maintenance of the *status quo*, the Russian Gov[ernment]t had been continually treading on our toes and pursuing an aggressive policy in China, Persia and Afghanistan. I told him that although we had shown great patience in China, had always urged our counsels of moderation on Japan, and had loyally supported the Austro-Russian scheme of reforms in Macedonia, they treated us with a want of frankness and had even gone so far as to address us a note on a matter of grave importance to British interests, which was peremptory in tone, and almost discourteous in its terms.⁽¹⁾ I said that having heard from both St. Petersburg and Paris that he would discuss terms for a general settlement on his return to London, you had been very much disappointed that he had no proposals to make and was apparently without instructions.

Count Benckendorff did not dissent from what I said: he admitted that Count Lamsdorff had spoken to him without appreciation of our attitude at Peking and Constantinople, and said that the moment was riper now for a friendly understanding than at any time during the past twenty years. On my suggesting to him that we should discuss informally what each Gov[ernment]t wanted, he repeated what I think he told you, that Manchuria should be discussed as a question where Russian interests preponderate, Central Asia from the point of view of the defence of Indian interests, and Persia as a country where both England and Russia have important and equal interests.

Beginning with Manchuria he urged that we should not press them hard on the subject of evacuation. He said there were two parties in Russia, one for evacuation and the other against, and that at the present moment the Russian Gov[ernment]t did not know its own mind. It would be better for us not to press this point but to seek for compensation elsewhere. I told him that we felt very strongly on the subject of Newchwang which was a Treaty port and where we had important treaty rights and a considerable trade. He said that the Russian Gov[ernment]t would certainly be ready to hand over Newchwang before long to the Chinese authorities and that they do not hold to the banking and Customs, but that all they want is the formation of an International Sanitary Commission where Russia, in view of her great interests and the proximity of her frontier, should have a privileged position. I asked him if he

⁽¹⁾ [This is apparently the communication referring to Afghanistan, mentioned *infra*, pp. 186-7, No. 182; p. 519, No. 465, and printed *infra*, p. 621. *Appendix II.* v. also *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, p. 223, No. 258.]

meant by this an International Commission where, for instance, Russia should have two votes to other countries' one vote, and he replied that he thought an arrangement might be made on some such basis.⁽²⁾ I then said that we expect Russia to fulfil her promises as to the opening of other ports in Manchuria and as to the maintenance of the "open door." He said that he was authorised by Count Lamsdorff to say that the promise to open other ports would be fulfilled, but he begged us not to press too hard on the subject of rates and tariffs, explaining that in every country where British and Russian trade competed, British goods drove Russian goods out of the market, and that we knew this to be the case.

As regards Afghanistan, Tibet and the countries conterminous with the Indian frontier the Russian Gov[ernment] would be ready to consider them as entirely within the British sphere of influence with all its consequences, the only point upon which they insisted being their right to have direct relations with Afghan officials on purely non-political questions. This would not imply diplomatic representation in Afghanistan nor any interference in Afghan affairs. It would be necessary to find some formula to meet this case, and the Russian Gov[ernment] would give guarantees for its observance. He said that Count Lamsdorff maintained that the Russian Gov[ernment] had never surrendered the right to have direct relations with the Afghan officials, but had voluntarily never exercised it. It was consequently their right to resume such relations. To this statement I demurred but did not discuss it further.⁽³⁾

With respect to Persia the question was, he said, more difficult. The Russian Gov[ernment] would not agree to a division of spheres of interest in the North and South, as they saw no reason why their commercial development should be limited to the northern half. I reminded him that he had in conversation with you talked of a "débouché commercial" in the Gulf and asked what he wanted, as surely there was no obstacle to their exporting their merchandise from Bushire, Bunder Abbas and elsewhere. He said that what he meant was a railway to the South, without a naval base, fortifications or troops to guard the road as in Manchuria. He remarked "You may guard it if you like!" I told him that I thought we would never allow any special privileges to any foreign Power on the shores of the Gulf for over a hundred years and had special Treaties with many of the Chiefs. He asked me if we wanted the Gulf to be a "mare clausum" and not open to foreign ships of war, and I replied that I had never heard this suggestion made. I added that the question of Seistan, being conterminous with the Afghan and Indian frontiers was of the greatest importance to us, and that we could never allow Russia predominance in that province. To this he answered that Seistan would come under the category of those countries [*sic* countries] which might be considered as entirely within the British sphere of influence and as involved in the defence of Indian interests. I remarked that the independence and integrity of Persia had always been a cardinal principle of British policy in Persia, and in any arrangement come to would probably be reaffirmed by us, upon which he made a sign of dissent but said nothing.

These are practically the chief points of our conversation which lasted over an hour. I impressed upon him that I had absolutely no authority from you to say anything, and that my remarks were purely academic, but that I should tell you what he said. To this he consented.

My opinion is that, although he is without any instructions and is told to do his best by Lamsdorff in making some suggestions, these questions have been discussed

(2) [For references showing the position in Newchwang, *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. I, p. 37, No. 56, *min.*; p. 41, No. 61; Vol. II, pp. 1-3, No. 1; p. 2, *note*; p. 38, No. 47; pp. 134-5, No. 144; p. 201, No. 228, *encl.*; p. 203, No. 231; p. 231, No. 271.]

(3) [Early in 1904 Count Lamsdorff stated that Russia had no present intention of appointing such agents in Afghanistan, but Lord Lansdowne did not think this assurance adequate, *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, pp. 247-8, No. 295 and *note*; p. 250, No. 296.]

between them in a formal way, and that it is not unlikely that the views expressed represent to a certain extent those of Lansdorff, although he has very likely kept something back.

Please excuse the length of my letter which is written hurriedly and very late at night.

Yours, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

P.S. The King told me that he had had an interview with Benckendorff in which he spoke to him very openly on Russian foreign policy.

No. 182.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Embassy Archives, Russia, 181/791.

(No. 384 [No. 334].) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 25, 1903.

I had a further conversation to-day with the Russian Ambassador in reference to the questions which we had previously discussed on the 7th and 17th instant.

Count Benckendorf mentioned to me that during his visit to Windsor the King had spoken very earnestly to him on the same subject, His Majesty expressing his desire that an attempt should be made to establish a better understanding between the two Governments in regard to the different points at issue. I told His Excellency that, as he was aware, I was prepared to discuss them with him as frankly as possible, and I had no objection to grouping them in the manner which he had himself suggested (*vide* my despatch No. 330 of the 17th November).⁽²⁾ I would, if he liked, give him an idea of the kind of arrangement which, speaking for myself, I should be ready to lay before my colleagues, and the Government of India, whom we should, of course, have to consult as to the Afghan question.

We should expect Russia to recognise in the most formal manner the position of Afghanistan as being entirely within our sphere of influence and guided by us in regard to its external policy. Subject to this I was prepared to admit that there might be direct communication between Russian and Afghan officials in regard to matters of a purely local character, and of a non-political complexion. Such communications should pass only between officials connected with the local administration of affairs adjoining the frontier. Any arrangement arrived at would, of course, have to be subject to the concurrence of the Ameer. Russia would have to agree to abstain from sending agents into Afghanistan.

Count Benckendorff raised no objection to any of these proposals. He asked me whether I believed that the Ameer had any officers on or near the frontier who could be employed in such a manner. I said that I thought no difficulty would be experienced in designating suitable agents for the purpose.

Count Benckendorff admitted that nothing could be done unless the Ameer was a consenting party.

I then told His Excellency that I thought it right to let him know, though I did so only for his private information, that His Majesty's Government had so deeply

⁽¹⁾ [The text here given is from the Embassy Archives and is the original. Some corrections in ink are visible on the original printed document. The number of the despatch should be 334 but was erroneously printed 384.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 183-4, No. 181 (a).]

resented the tone of the Russian communication of the 5th October⁽³⁾ in regard to our relations with Afghanistan that I had, by desire of the Cabinet, addressed to you a long despatch intended as a defence of our conduct, and, I was afraid I must add, as an indictment of that of the Russian Government.

That despatch was written on the 5th November, but in consequence of the extremely conciliatory character of the communication which Count Lamsdorff had desired his Excellency to make to me on the 7th instant on his return to his post, I had telegraphed to you desiring you to take no action for the present upon it.

I then gave his Excellency a copy of the despatch in question (No. 305 of the 5th November), and begged him to read it attentively, adding that I for one should be glad if we should find ourselves in a position to instruct you to withhold it altogether.

Passing to Thibet I said that we should expect Russia to recognise that, owing to the geographical position of that country, it also was within our sphere, and we should expect an undertaking that Russia would not send agents into Thibetan territory.

As regards the Far East I said that, in my view, it would be reasonable that we should recognise the predominating interest of Russia as the limitrophe Power in Manchuria. We had no desire to interfere with her control of her Manchurian railway system. The two Governments had, indeed, agreed that railway development in this part of the Chinese Empire should fall to the Russian Government. Nor could we, I thought, take exception to any reasonable measures of precaution which the Russian Government might adopt for insuring the safety of the line. On the other hand, it was essential that our Treaty rights in all parts of the Chinese Empire should be respected, and that our trade should receive equal treatment in those regions. I dwelt upon the deplorable effect which had been produced on the public mind in this country by the neglect of the Russian Government to fulfil its pledges regarding Manchuria. If circumstances had arisen rendering it impossible that these pledges should be fulfilled, it was surely due to us that some explanation should be given of those circumstances. I trusted that the Russian Government was now in a position to fix a date for the evacuation, or at any rate explain why this was not done.

Count Benckendorff dwelt upon the danger of giving these pledges in circumstances which, as experience had shown, rendered it not always easy to fulfil them.

I asked him whether, at any rate, in the case of Newchwang it could not be at once arranged that an early evacuation should take place. I attached the greatest importance to this, owing to the extent of our interest in the trade of that port. We should also expect the Russian Government to put an end to the arrangement under which the Newchwang Customs were at present paid to the Russian and Chinese Bank, and a part of the proceeds intercepted by the Russian Government.

In reply to an observation by his Excellency I said that it seemed to me reasonable that Russia should be adequately represented on the Board of Health, and that we had no desire to prevent this.

We then discussed the question of Persia. I said that I saw no reason why we should not recognise that the position of Russia, as the limitrophe Power gave her a certain preponderance in the north, nor did we desire to deny to her commercial facilities in the south of Persia, and on the Persian Gulf. His Excellency would, however, remember that Russia had herself forbidden Persia to construct railways for a term of ten years, and if that arrangement held good, there could, while it lasted, be no question of a line connecting Persia with the sea. Should the embargo be removed, and should there be any idea of carrying a line through southern Persia, we should expect to be consulted, and an amicable arrangement might be made under which we might be given control over the southern portion of the line and its approaches to the sea.

(3) [The contents of this communication and the course of the negotiation generally are indicated in the summary given *infra*, p. 519, No. 466, and the full text of the communication is printed *infra*, p. 621, Appendix II.]

Finally, there was the question of Seistan. We should expect the Russian Government to recognise that this province was entirely under British influence, and to abstain from interfering with the trade routes leading through it.

His Excellency throughout listened to my observations attentively, and did not, so far as I was able to follow his comments, oppose any serious objections to my suggestions, which he promised to consider.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

No. 183.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. Russia 1677.

(No. 176.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 22, 1904.

The Russian Amb[assado]r told me today that he had had an interview with the King who had received him with the utmost cordiality, and given him an account of a conversation which had taken place at Copenhagen between H[is] M[ajesty] and M. Isvolsky in which H[is] M[ajesty] had expressed an earnest desire for the establishment of friendly relations between Great Britain and Russia, and for an amicable understanding on various questions outstanding between the two Powers.⁽¹⁾

Count Benckendorff went on to say that the effect of H[is] M[ajesty]'s language to M. Isvolsky could not fail to be excellent and would certainly tend to improve the relations between the two countries. H[is] E[xc]cellency felt however convinced that Count Lamsdorff would almost immediately ask him what was in fact suggested by H[is] M[ajesty]'s language. What could the Russian Gov[ernmen]t do? What was H[is] M[ajesty]'s G[overnment] prepared to do in order to give effect to H[is] M[ajesty]'s views? Was it possible for anything to be done at once?

I reminded H[is] E[xc]cellency of a conversation which had taken place between us at the commencement of the war when he had expressed the opinion, in which I concurred, that for the moment the conversations which he and I had begun as to a number of outstanding questions could not with advantage be continued. I remained under the same impression.

H[is] E[xc]cellency observed that the King had said much the same thing to him, and he intended to repeat it to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t. No such limiting words were however to be found in M. Isvolsky's report of the conversation at Copenhagen.

I said that I felt little doubt that the King had taken it for granted that it was not possible to do much in present circumstances although H[is] M[ajesty] desired to affirm generally the principles upon which action might be taken when a suitable opportunity occurred.

H[is] E[xc]cellency said that at one point something might be thought to be done at once. Could we say something which would allay the apprehension of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in regard to our action in Tibet?

I replied that statements had been made in both Houses of Parliament, which ought, I thought, to be highly satisfactory to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t.

H[is] E[xc]cellency fully admitted that no exception could be taken to these statements, but he asked me what we should do supposing the Tibetans refused to send delegates to meet us and left us severely alone at Gyantse. Could we say what we should do, or even what we should not do, in such an event?

⁽¹⁾ [Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 284-7, quotes the full account given by M. Isvolski of the interview, and states that it was approved by the King, and that a copy was sent by the latter privately to Lord Lansdowne, with instructions to "keep the copy private and only show it to Mr. Balfour." *ib.* p. 287.]

I said I did not see how I could be expected to reply to such a hypothetical question. If a new situation were to arise the Gov[ernment] of India would no doubt report the facts to us and make their recommendations which we might or might not accept.

H[is] E[xc]ellency told me that he was going to Paris for a few days and would probably discuss matters with M. Nelidoff and he repeated his opinion that although a general settlement could scarcely be thought of at the present time, we ought in view of the language used by H[is] M[ajesty] to miss no opportunity of adjusting amicably any minor differences which might arise between our two countries. I said that in principle I entirely concurred with H[is] E[xc]ellency.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

[ED. NOTE.—As quoted in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, p. 401, the Marquess of Lansdowne informed Sir Edmund Monson on April 29, 1904, that M. Paul Cambon the French Ambassador had spoken to him that day on Anglo-Russian relations. "He told me that His Majesty the King had expressed to him the earnest desire that these relations should be improved, that, if possible, an agreement should be arrived at for the settlement of some of the questions which had occasioned friction and misunderstanding between the two Governments in the past. His Excellency cordially approved of the idea, but recognised the immense difficulties of giving effect to it, particularly at the present time.

I expressed my agreement and added an expression of satisfaction that public feeling in both countries had during the last few weeks apparently become much calmer. I said that we desired to avoid all possible causes of misunderstanding at the present time, and should spare no efforts to do so. There seemed to me, indeed, to be only one point which might, although, I did not think this was likely, give rise to really serious trouble." The remainder of the despatch refers to the Straits question and is quoted on p. 50, No. 43, *note*.]

No. 184.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. China 1749.

(No. 188 A.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 4, 1904.⁽¹⁾

The Russian Ambassador told me to-day that he had received from Count Lamsdorff a message, of which the following is a summary, on the subject of the conversation which M. Izvolsky had had the honour of having with the King.

Count Lamsdorff began by stating that he had heard from M. Izvolsky of the latter having sent to Count Benckendorff a copy of his report of this conversation. The words used by His Majesty were, Count Lamsdorff thought, most significant, and offered fresh evidence of the favourable sentiments with which the King was animated. The war with Japan rendered the present moment unfavourable for entering upon negotiations, but the Russian Government had never shown themselves averse to a sincere understanding, provided that His Majesty's Government would formulate clearly the equitable conditions upon which they desired that it should be established. Count Benckendorff was at liberty to speak very clearly in this sense, and to explain to His Majesty's Government that, on the basis of the assurances and declarations which they had recently given to Russia, the latter would be most willing to arrive at as complete an understanding as possible on all questions interesting the two Governments as soon as the end of the war offered an opportunity of entering on negotiations on this subject, on the assumption, of course, that the attitude of Great Britain during the crisis in the Far East continued to be in conformity with the assurances which she had given.

The private and personal letter which had been addressed by the Emperor to the King, and conveyed to its august destination by Sir C. Scott, was the best reply that could be made to the gracious words which the King had used to M. Izvolsky.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was apparently not actually sent until the 10th, although it retained the date of its original draft.]

I told Count Benckendorff that I had listened with satisfaction to the statement which he had been desired to make. His Excellency would remember that I had on more than one occasion expressed my hope that at a more opportune moment we should be able to renew our discussions as to the possibility of a general understanding between our two countries; discussions which had been so unfortunately interrupted by the outbreak of war.

With regard to Count Lamsdorff's observations as to our attitude while the crisis in the Far East continued, it seemed to me that we might well endeavour to deal in a friendly and considerate spirit with any questions which might from time to time arise. His Excellency had, I said, more than once referred to one such question—that, namely, of our attitude towards Thibet. As to this, he had been good enough to express himself in terms of approval of the policy described in our telegram of the 6th November to the Government of India. There was, on the other hand, another question with regard to which it was, I thought, in the power of the Russian Government to gratify us without any sacrifice of Russian interests. I referred to the proposed Khedivial Decree which had lately been prepared in consultation with France. It would be agreeable to us if the Russian Government would give its adhesion to that Decree, and, if they would do so, I felt no doubt that I should be able to give, in reference to Thibet, an assurance that we still adhered to the policy of the telegram to which I had referred.

His Excellency asked me to show him the telegram of the 6th November, and, after reading it through carefully, said that it seemed to him to be all that the Russian Government could desire.

Speaking for himself, he was fully prepared to accept my proposal. Although I had said nothing to him about the Khedivial Decree, he was aware of the importance which we attached to the matter. He expected almost immediately to hear something from Count Lamsdorff upon the subject, and he would call on me again as soon as he had received his instructions.

I am, &c.

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 185.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1680.

(No. 256.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. May 18, 1904.

R. May 28, 1904.

By preconcerted arrangement I called on Count Lamsdorff yesterday. He gave me a very warm and friendly reception and expressed his pleasure at my return to St. Petersburg as His Majesty's representative. At the same time he expressed his regret that the Emperor was absent for a few days from St. Petersburg, but promised to inform His Majesty at once of my arrival and to ask that I might be received in audience as soon as possible after the Emperor's return on Sunday next in order to present my credentials as His Majesty's Ambassador together with the private letter which the King had been pleased to intrust to me.⁽¹⁾

In the course of conversation I told His Excellency that, in view of the frequent interviews which Count Benckendorff had had with Your Lordship during the last few months, and, after the very clear manner in which you had explained to him the views and attitude of His Majesty's Government on the various questions of interest to both

⁽¹⁾ [This seems to be the letter dated May 12, which is quoted in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 288-9. It succeeded an interchange of letters between the two rulers, following King Edward's conversation with M. Isvolski on April 14, 1904. *cp. supra*, pp. 188-9, No. 188.]

Governments, it was hardly necessary for me to say much on these subjects on the present occasion. I wished however, in conformity with your Lordship's instructions, to express to him the friendly sentiments of His Majesty's Government, to assure him of their firm intention to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality during the progress of the war in the Far East, and of their earnest desire to resume at a more suitable moment the exchange of views which had been initiated before the commencement of the war, with a view to arriving at a general agreement on all questions at issue between the two Governments. In the meantime it was the hope and desire of His Majesty's Government that any question which might arise between the two Governments should be treated on both sides with frank discussion and in a conciliatory spirit.

Count Lamsdorff in reply said that he could warmly reciprocate the friendly sentiments of His Majesty's Government, that he was most anxious to arrive at a friendly understanding with His Majesty's Government, and that every effort must be made by both Governments to arrive at this happy result.

After a few expressions of regret at the present state of affairs in the Far East and a disclaimer of all responsibility on the part of the Russian Government for the outbreak of war, he referred to Your Lordship's conversation with Count Benckendorff on the 10th instant in connection with the Khedivial Decree.

His Excellency said that he wished me to understand that when, by order of the Emperor, the Russian Government had declared their readiness to accept the Khedivial Decree, they had wished to be the first amongst the Powers to give their assent as a friendly act towards both England and France, and as a mark of their appreciation of the happy results to be obtained from the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement, but that it had been an unpleasant surprise to them when they found that they were asked to subscribe to a further clause in the Agreement. The Khedivial Decree was a question in which Russian interests were concerned, but the other clauses in the Anglo-French Agreement whether they related to Egypt, Morocco, or elsewhere, did not concern the Russian Government, and he earnestly deprecated any extension of the question at issue.

He said that he could give no reply to Count Benckendorff until he had submitted the matter to the consideration of the Emperor after his return to St. Petersburg next Sunday, but that he feared that the present development would hardly be pleasing to His Majesty after the friendly action which had been taken on the Emperor's initiative.

Turning to the question of Thibet, Count Lamsdorff said that the text which Your Lordship had submitted to Count Benckendorff was ambiguous, in that what was given with one hand was taken away with the other. The general sense of the memorandum⁽²⁾ was quite satisfactory except for the sentence which implied a reserve as to the future action of His Majesty's Government in Thibet, and which entirely spoilt its effect. In reply to my suggestion that there must have been some misunderstanding he admitted that it might possibly be due to a misinterpretation of the sense of the sentence, but that he had asked Count Benckendorff for explanations.

I told Count Lamsdorff that, unless my memory deceived me, the memorandum was framed entirely in the sense of the telegram to the Viceroy of November 6th,⁽³⁾ and that the concluding sentence was drawn up in exceptionally forcible and emphatic terms. At the same time I assured him of my absolute conviction that His Majesty's Government harboured no designs for the annexation of Thibet or for a protection over the country, but that owing to the obstinacy of the Thibetans it had been necessary to take certain military precautions, and that it might even be necessary to go to Lhasa before we obtained satisfaction from the Thibetans and proper guarantees for the observation of their Treaty engagements with His Majesty's Government.

Count Lamsdorff recognized the necessity of obtaining satisfaction from the Thibetans before retiring from Thibet, but was anxious that any declaration of the

(2) [This is apparently the communication made on May 10, *v. infra*, p. 307, No. 291.]

(3) [*cp. infra*, p. 305, *Ed. note*.]

intentions of His Majesty's Government should be clear and explicit, and incapable of misconstruction.

His Excellency then turned to the question of reforms in Macedonia, and, alluding to the recent debate in the House of Lords, expressed his disappointment and regret at the pessimistic tone of Your Lordship's speech,⁽¹⁾ which he maintained was quite unwarranted by the situation in that province. He enlarged upon the danger to be apprehended from the slightest appearance of a lack of confidence on the part of any of the Powers or of disunion amongst them, as being likely to encourage the revolutionary elements in Macedonia to hope that, by impeding the present reforms, another scheme of wider scope than the present programme might be introduced by some other Power or Powers. He maintained that Europe had every reason to be satisfied with the progress which had been made and which had exceeded all expectations, and the fact that the spring had been tided over without an outbreak of war was to be regarded as an indisputable success of the present policy. The reports which he had received from the Russian Agents in Macedonia were of a most satisfactory and encouraging nature, showing that calm and confidence had been to a great extent restored, while the work of repatriation was being energetically pushed forward. These reports he proposed to publish very shortly.

I explained to Count Lamsdorff that it was not very surprising that Your Lordship's speech should have been in a pessimistic tone in view of the repeated and protracted delays which had occurred in setting the International Gendarmerie in motion, and, although our officers had been ready for months, I gathered that it was only within the last few days that they had started for their posts. The obstructive difficulties which had been raised on points of trivial importance had naturally tended to make both His Majesty's Government and the English people sceptical as to whether the Mürzsteg programme was really intended, and went sufficiently far, to relieve the suffering populations and to satisfy the better class of local reformers, but whatever may have been their feelings His Majesty's Government had loyally supported the policy of Austria and Russia and, in spite of the pressure of Parliament and of public opinion in England had resisted "à contre-cœur" any suggestions to propose an extension of the programme in a sense which might satisfy British public sentiment. I added that, in my personal opinion, if the Russian Government would even now propose some measure of small magnitude, as for instance the nomination of a few agents to supervise the collection of the tithes or any similar scheme, such a proposal would be very warmly received in England, and would be regarded as an earnest of their intentions to obtain more liberal reforms in the future than those limited by the programme of Mürzsteg.

Count Lamsdorff replied that he must adhere to his opinion that any extension, however small, of the policy of the Great Powers could only have an unsettling effect upon the population of Macedonia and would give further encouragement to the revolutionary party. Even if the aims of the Mürzsteg programme were comparatively modest they were nevertheless of a pacificatory nature, and had so far been justified by the very considerable results which had been attained. As soon as the contemplated reforms had been satisfactorily carried out, it would then be the duty of the Governments concerned to consider what further modifications should be introduced into other departments of the local administration for the benefit of the inhabitants of the province.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

(1) [The speech of May 5. *Parl. Deb.* 4th Ser., Vol. 134, pp. 508-13. *cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 75.]

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. France 3666.

(No. 323.) Most Confidential.

My Lord,

Paris, D. May 27, 1904.

R. May 28, 1904.

I said to M. Delcassé the day before yesterday that the effect of the prompt acceptance by the Russian Government of the invitation to adhere to the project of the Khedivial Decree forming so important a part in the Anglo-French Arrangement of April 8th last, had not failed to produce considerable satisfaction in London.

His Excellency replied that he hoped that there would be a reciprocity of conciliation on the part of His Majesty's Government. That Russia having taken a step in advance of a friendly nature had a right to expect a corresponding movement from Great Britain.

I said that His Excellency must well know that there was at this moment, and had been for some time past, a very sincere readiness in London to meet with cordiality any genuine evidence of a friendly policy on the part of Russia.

The existing hostilities in which the latter Power is unfortunately engaged render difficult at this moment any material alteration in the relations between the two countries; but the foreign policy of Great Britain is never characterised by any want of generosity; and I could not doubt that the Government of the Emperor Nicholas would give adequate credence to the assurances of that of my Sovereign as to the attitude of Great Britain towards Russia.

M. Delcassé did not pursue the subject.

I have, &c.

EDMUND MONSON

⁽¹⁾ [This is reprinted from *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. III, p. 19.]

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1680.

(No. 272.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. May 27, 1904.

R. June 1, 1904.

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that I was yesterday received in audience by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress and presented my credentials to His Majesty as the King's Ambassador at this Court.

I was accompanied to Tsarsky Selo by the Master of the Ceremonies, the staff of His Majesty's Embassy and Colonel Sir Howard Vincent, for whom I had obtained at his own request special permission to be present.

On leaving the train we were conveyed in State coaches to the Palace.

Immediately on arrival I was received in private audience by Their Majesties.

The Emperor, who was wearing the uniform of the Scots Greys and the ribbon and star of the Order of the Garter, expressed his pleasure at my return to St. Petersburg, and enquired after the health of Their Majesties the King and Queen. Having assured the Emperor of Their Majesties' welfare I presented my credentials as His Majesty's Ambassador together with a private letter which the King had been pleased to entrust to me to hand personally to the Emperor. At the same time in accordance with the King's commands, I gave to Their Majesties the affectionate messages of friendship and high esteem which I had been charged by His Majesty to convey, together with the assurance of His Majesty's very earnest desire for the establishment of the most cordial and friendly relations between the two Courts, and the hope that

at the conclusion of the war it might be possible to resume and to bring to a satisfactory conclusion the negotiations which had been initiated by Your Lordship with Count Benckendorff but which had unfortunately been temporarily interrupted. The Emperor, in thanking me, replied: "That also is my fervent wish."

After a conversation with Their Majesties which lasted some little time the Empress expressed a desire to make the acquaintance of Sir Howard Vincent and I had the honour of presenting him to Their Majesties who conversed with him for a few minutes. The Empress then retired.

At the Emperor's request I had the honour of presenting the members of the Embassy and, after exchanging a few words with them, His Majesty withdrew.

We returned to St. Petersburg in the same manner as we had come.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 188.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1680.

(No. 283.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. June 8, 1904.

R. June 13, 1904.

When I saw Count Lamsdorff today at his weekly reception, I asked him if Count Benckendorff had transmitted to him Your Lordship's thanks for the adhesion of the Russian Government to the Khedivial Decree attached to the Anglo-French Agreement. His Excellency replied that he had received yesterday a telegram in that sense and that he hoped to receive tomorrow the text of the memorandum which you had given to the Russian Ambassador containing the assurances of His Majesty's Government respecting the scope of their future policy in Thibet.⁽¹⁾

Count Lamsdorff proceeded to remark that the removal of these questions from the sphere of discussion was of happy augury for the future, and that he sincerely hoped that, little by little, other questions arising between the British and Russian Governments might be solved in an equally satisfactory and friendly manner. He wished to impress upon me that certain reports which had been spread at the beginning of the war, but which had since been reduced to their proper proportions, had deeply impressed the Russian people and had forced upon them the conviction that the alliance between England and Japan had been concluded with the idea of encouraging Japan to declare war against Russia. Slowly but gradually people were beginning to understand that the alliance had been contracted by His Majesty's Government with no hostile intentions but rather with a view to the pacification of the Far East, and that, when war had been declared by Japan, His Majesty's Government were in no way to blame for the action of their ally. Nevertheless public opinion in Russia was still very suspicious of the attitude of Great Britain in the present war and the conduct of His Majesty's Government was being very carefully watched and would be regarded as a test of their sincerity in wishing to arrive later at a satisfactory agreement on all questions in dispute between the two Governments. He fully recognised that no negotiations would be possible during the progress of the war, but that if it could be shown that during the war the action of His Majesty's Government had been both friendly and neutral there would, he anticipated, be every reason to hope that such an attitude would be appreciated by public opinion in Russia and would prepare the ground for more friendly relations, the realisation of which had always been the dream of his official career.

I reminded Count Lamsdorff that I had already told him on a previous occasion that it was the desire and intention of His Majesty's Government to observe an attitude of the strictest neutrality during the war and that The King, Mr. Balfour

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 310, No. 293.]

and Your Lordship had spoken to me in the same sense. I felt quite confident of the loyalty of the intentions of His Majesty's Government towards the Russian Government, but that he must remember that His Majesty's Government had similar obligations of neutrality towards the Japanese Government and that he must neither expect nor ask them, while observing a friendly neutrality towards Russia, to take any action which might be construed into a breach of their neutrality towards Japan.

Count Lamsdorff at once replied that there was no expectation nor desire that His Majesty's Government should observe any other attitude than that of the strictest neutrality towards both of the belligerents during the course of the war, and he assured me that there could be no question of placing His Majesty's Government in such a predicament as I had foreshadowed.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

II.—THE SITUATION ARISING FROM THE PEACE OF PORTSMOUTH AND THE RENEWAL OF THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE.

[ED. NOTE.—The promotion of an understanding between Russia and Great Britain was interrupted by various difficulties arising in connexion with the Russo-Japanese War (*v. supra* ch. XXIII, pp. 5–41, *passim*). Better relations began as a result of friendly messages conveyed by Sir Charles Hardinge from King Edward in May, 1905, as the following shows.]

No. 189.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1700.

(No. 350.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. May 30, 1905.

My Lord,

R. June 5, 1905.

I arrived in St. Petersburg yesterday morning and in the afternoon I called upon Count Lamsdorff.

On being received by His Excellency I conveyed to him, by the King's command, the friendly messages which His Majesty had entrusted to me.⁽¹⁾

I told Count Lamsdorff that The King had preserved a very pleasant remembrance of his interview with him nearly three years ago and that His Majesty had confidence in him in the knowledge that his efforts would always be directed towards the maintenance of peace and the promotion of good relations between the two countries.

Count Lamsdorff was evidently very pleased at receiving His Majesty's gracious message and, while asking me to convey to The King his most respectful thanks, assured me that it was his great aim and object to improve the relations between England and Russia, and that he trusted that His Majesty's Government would fully realise that strenuous efforts were being repeatedly made by interested parties to stir up strife between the two countries but that he hoped that the two Governments, while thoroughly appreciating the danger to be apprehended, would succeed in frustrating such a policy by carefully avoiding any incidents likely to stir up animosity or ill-feeling. For this reason he regretted all the more such an incident as that of the detention and return of Colonel Waters⁽²⁾ which, though evidently due to a complete misunderstanding, might possibly create an unfavourable impression which, if it existed, he begged me to do my utmost to mitigate and remove. He fully realised the actual difficulties of the present situation but he was full of hope and confidence that

⁽¹⁾ [These are indicated in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 306.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp.* Colonel W. H. Waters: *Secret and Confidential* (1926), pp. 279–292. This contains an account of the incident from Colonel Waters' point of view.]

at the end of this miserable war a solution would be found for all the questions at issue between the two Governments, in the same manner that a friendly arrangement had been come to between England and France. He enlarged at some length upon the advantage to Russia of the latter agreement, and stated that the news of the success of The King's recent visit to Paris had given him great satisfaction. It was only quite recently that he had expressed himself in similar terms to the Emperor, who had at the same time expressed his conviction of The King's friendly sympathy towards him.

I assured Count Lamsdorff that in this the Emperor was not mistaken, and that I was convinced that His Majesty's Government would be only too ready and willing to resume at the proper moment the negotiations for an all-round settlement of outstanding questions with Russia which had unfortunately been interrupted by the outbreak of war. I remarked that His Majesty's [sic] Government fully appreciated the attitude of the Russian Government in having avoided by their instructions to the Russian Naval Commanders any repetition of the incidents which had last year produced such a strain on the peaceful relations of the two countries, and I pointed out that this moderation had been warmly reciprocated in the efforts made by His Majesty's Government to avoid any possibility of suspicion of hostility towards the Russian Fleet in its passage to the Far East or of partiality in their obligations as a neutral towards Japan.

I seized the opportunity to bring the conversation round to Mr. Balfour's speech in the House of Commons on Imperial Defence.⁽³⁾ and I pointed out that the Prime Minister's remarks dealt entirely with the problem of defence, and that His Majesty's Government no more contemplated at the present moment the possibility of a Russian attack on India than a French invasion of Great Britain. This was made perfectly obvious by Mr. Balfour's own words when he stated that he did not believe that the invasion of India formed any part of the policy of the Russian Government, while the conduct of His Majesty's Government in Thibet, Afghanistan and Persia during the past two years gave abundant proofs of their peaceful and unaggressive intentions and of their desire to avoid any semblance of taking advantage of Russia's difficulties in the Far East.

Count Lamsdorff assured me that, in spite of the outcry which had been raised in some of the organs of the Russian press, he had never regarded the Prime Minister's speech as having any hostile tendency towards Russia, that every country had a legitimate right to take the necessary measures for its own defence, and that the measures contemplated by Mr. Balfour were evidently of a purely defensive nature relating to future rather than to actual eventualities and inferring a state of relations between the two countries which he had every confidence would be avoided.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A very satisfactory communication.

E.R.

⁽³⁾ [Speech of May 11, 1905. *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 146, pp. 62-84.]

No. 190.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1701.

(No. 387.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. June 13, 1905.

R. June 19, 1905.

The general opinion in diplomatic circles in St. Petersburg is that there has recently been a change in Russian sentiment towards Germany and that the sympathy

which existed between these two countries is not now as warm as was the case a few months ago. The impression seems to prevail that the German Emperor has been fishing in troubled waters and that having displayed excessive friendliness towards Russia while there was a hope that Russian arms might yet be victorious, and having profited by this appearance of friendliness to float a Russian loan on highly advantageous terms for German financiers, and to obtain large orders for military and naval stores of every kind, the fulfilment of which had strained to the utmost the obligations of Germany as a neutral Power, His Majesty has diverted his sympathy from Russia to Japan as the rising Power with whom it would now be more profitable to enter into closer and more friendly relations.

I have been told by the French Minister that the action of the German Emperor in raising the Morocco question immediately after the battle of Mukden, which appears to have been the psychological moment for a change in the policy of the German Emperor, had deeply wounded Russian susceptibilities by showing to the world that he considered that after her reverses in the Far East the support of Russia was a factor upon which France could no longer count as effective in Europe. The irritation caused by this feeling had been still further increased by a telegram which the German Emperor had sent to the Emperor of Russia asking His Majesty to impress upon the French Government the necessity of coming to terms with Germany in a settlement of the Morocco question. The Emperor had at once replied by a curt refusal, stating that Russian interests were small in Morocco, but that, even if they were not so, he would in no case act in opposition to France.

Although little notice at the time was taken by the Russian press of the speech made by the German Emperor a few weeks ago accusing Russian officers of dissipation, I am informed that the Emperor, who regarded it as an unwarranted attack upon the honour of his army, was deeply wounded by it.

Again, the exceptionally friendly reception given to the Japanese Prince Arisugawa and the bestowal of the Order of the Black Eagle upon His Imperial Highness, although it must be admitted that the German Emperor could hardly have done otherwise, gave nevertheless great offence to the Emperor and the Russian Court.

Finally the resignation of Monsieur Delcassé, who is regarded in Russia as the corner stone of the Franco-Russian alliance, is considered to have been due to the action of the German Emperor and to his desire to prove to France and to the world the futility of that alliance.

These incidents, combined with the restless spirit and feverish energy of the German Emperor, have impressed the Emperor with the conviction of how little the friendship of Germany is to be relied on and that, in coquetting with Japan, the German Emperor is playing for his own hand and is now offering to Japan the sympathy and encouragement which a few months ago were so freely lavished upon Russia.

It must not however be supposed that a coolness with Germany would be of any but a temporary and platonic character, for a friendly Germany is now more than ever essential to Russia's needs, and she has been, and probably will be for many years, the only Power of whom Russia is really afraid.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

The information is important.

E.R.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1702.

(No. 526.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. September 6, 1905.

R. September 16, 1905.

The news reached St. Petersburg last night of the signature at Portsmouth, U[nited] S[tates of] A[merica], of the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Japan after exactly nineteen months of war.⁽¹⁾

Telegrams received from the provinces during the past week have confirmed the first impressions, reported in my telegram No. 159 of the 31st ultimo,⁽²⁾ of the joy and enthusiasm which the news of the conclusion of peace has produced throughout the whole country with the exception perhaps of St. Petersburg where opinions are divided and where an influential section of public opinion, inspired by the military and reactionary parties makes no secret of its preference for the continuation of the war. The views of these latter are represented only by the "Novoe Vremya," peace being warmly acclaimed by the whole of the liberal press. It is not the conditions of peace to which exception is taken by this party in favour of war which receives strong support from the great majority of ladies in St. Petersburg society who, I may add parenthetically, have hardly any relations at all in the Russian army in Manchuria, but the opinion is openly expressed that the war should have been indefinitely prolonged until a decisive victory had been obtained, and that the conclusion of peace after such an unbroken record of disasters both on land and sea is an intolerable humiliation. All such persons believe that another great battle would have resulted in the victory which they have so long and so ardently desired, but this view is not in accord with foreign expert opinion nor with that even of many Russians.

I received a visit two days ago from a Russian officer whom I have known for some years and who has occupied a high position on the general staff in Manchuria from the very commencement of the war, and who had returned from the front only a few days previously. He spoke without reserve of the military situation in Manchuria and said that the Russian and Japanese positions were now so strongly fortified as to be almost impregnable, and that an attack by either army on the positions opposed to them would be almost certain to end in disaster and terrible losses. As a matter of fact, although the Russian army was in a position to attack, it was doubtful whether it would be able to advance even if the attack was successful. Under these circumstances if the war had been continued the two armies facing each other would have been compelled to remain in their actual positions, but the Japanese would have been free to invest Vladivostock and to occupy Khabarovsk and the maritime provinces, a situation which would have produced a bad moral impression not only in Russia but especially on General Linievitch's army. He was therefore of opinion that peace on the terms agreed upon was the wisest solution of the conflict. In reply to my enquiry as to how the news of peace would be received by the troops in Manchuria, he added that the desire for peace and for withdrawal from Manchuria was general, but only after a victory had been obtained.

All such conjectures of what might have been are at present of purely speculative interest, and now that the chapter of this terrible war can be regarded as definitely closed it may perhaps not be out of place to offer a few remarks upon the position of Anglo-Russian relations as affected by the war, and by the many incidents which have occurred during its progress.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 107-11, No. 101.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It stated that while the news of the peace had been received in St. Petersburg without enthusiasm, considerable satisfaction had been shown in the large provincial towns. F.O. Russia 1706.]

I need hardly remind Your Lordship of the campaign of malicious lies and misrepresentation which was initiated against Great Britain simultaneously with the outbreak of war and which lasted during the first year of its progress, commencing with the reported utilisation of Wei-hei-wei as the base from which the Japanese fleet made their attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur on the 8th of February and culminating with the accusations levelled against the Hull fishermen of complicity in an attack by imaginery torpedo-boats on the Baltic fleet, nor is it necessary for me to recapitulate all the serious incidents which have occurred during the past eighteen months and which on more than one occasion have strained the relations existing between the two countries almost to breaking point. During all this period the position of His Majesty's Embassy has been one of difficulty while that of British subjects residing in Russia has not been without personal risk, owing to the bitter hostility and incitement of the Chauvinistic press against England and all that was English. The firm attitude of His Majesty's Government in openly refuting the baseless charges made against their policy and officials, the determined remonstrances addressed to the Russian Government against the illegal actions of their naval officers, and finally the temperate proposal of arbitration after an unprecedented outburst of warlike indignation owing to the unfortunate incident on the Dogger Bank, which was eventually proved to have been an unwarrantable attack on harmless British fishing-vessels, thus avoiding what would have been a useless and unprofitable war, all these causes have tended to impress the Russian Government and Russian public opinion with a more favourable idea of the dignity and impartiality with which His Majesty's Government faithfully discharged their obligations of neutrality not only towards Russia but also towards their Japanese allies. The loyalty of His Majesty's Government to that of France during the recent Morocco incident has also afforded a useful object lesson which has had due effect, and I have no hesitation in asserting my opinion that during the past six months there has been a decided improvement in public sentiment towards England, that the bitter hostility which was daily displayed in the Russian press has almost entirely disappeared, and that the relations between the two countries are now on a more friendly footing than has been the case since the outbreak of war.

It is always possible that an incident, for example on the Afghan frontier, might provoke a recrudescence of animosity, but it must be remembered that the military and Chauvinistic party in Russia has fortunately sustained during the past war a shock from which it is probable that it will never recover, and that the liberal and constitutional party, the party of the future, is less likely to embark on a policy of adventure, there being every probability that its attention and that of the country will for a long time be entirely engrossed with questions of constitutional development.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 192.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1702.

(No. 573.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. September 26, 1905.

R. September 30, 1905.

I called this afternoon upon Mr. Hartwig, Director of the first Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and he informed me confidentially that in accordance with the agreement with His Majesty's Government Monsieur Klemm had been appointed Consul General at Meshed and that he would leave Bombay during the

month of November, a few weeks having been allowed him to settle his private affairs in India. His successor had not yet been designated.

While thanking Mr. Hartwig for this communication I expressed my satisfaction that we had thus succeeded in settling a question which had been pending for the last six years and I impressed upon him the necessity of paying special attention to the selection of a successor to Mr. Klemm who should be of a conciliatory character and a thorough gentleman, so that an end might once for all be put to the era of suspicion and distrust which had surrounded the Russian Consulate at Bombay from the very moment of its establishment.

Mr. Hartwig replied that he was fully alive to the importance of a good selection. He added that the settlement of this long pending question gave him great satisfaction as being of happy augury for the removal in the near future of other sources of suspicion and distrust between our two countries. The loyal cooperation of His Majesty's Government in Macedonia and Crete, especially in the latter island, proved conclusively that there need be no cause for conflict between Great Britain and Russia in the Near East and that Russia would be left a free hand for the impending struggle with Germany on the shores of the Bosphorus. The questions pending in Asia could with a little moderation on both sides be easily settled, and although Count Benckendorff repeatedly wrote that the idea of a Russian invasion of India was deeply ingrained in the minds of Englishmen he could assure me that such ambitions were only to be found in the most shallow brains of the military classes and that there was at this moment in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs a document prepared by General Kuropatkin in 1899 in which it was stated that the actual frontier of Russia and Afghanistan was ideal and should under no circumstances be modified. As for Persia where Russia had important interests, there should be no difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory settlement and the Persian should be prevented at all costs from playing off England against Russia and *vice versa*.

I remarked to Mr. Hartwig that I entirely shared his views as to the feasibility of settling satisfactorily all questions that might be pending in Asia between the two Governments but I fully realised the importance which the Russian Government attached to the maintenance of good relations with her western neighbour and I had some doubts as to whether an Anglo-Russian agreement would not provoke a serious outburst of ill-humour at Berlin which might prejudice the good relations so happily existing between Germany and Russia.

To this Mr. Hartwig replied with some warmth that although the Russian Government naturally attached importance to the maintenance of friendly relations with their neighbours the policy of the German Emperor was appreciated at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at its proper value and was dictated solely by self interest. The latest attempt had been to insinuate every sort of danger to be apprehended from the new Anglo-Japanese Treaty and that it constituted a menace to German interests in China.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless it was not for the German Government to interfere in questions pending between the British and Russian Governments in Asia in which they could have no interest nor concern. He alluded bitterly to the duplicity of the German Government in having declared at the time of the South African War that they were in possession of a document from the Russian Government proposing intervention while in reality it was a document which he himself had drafted and which Count Osten-Sacken had delivered stating that Russia had no interests in South Africa and that if the German Government were of opinion that intervention was necessary at that stage of the war they themselves should take the first step.

Mr. Hartwig continued that in any case, and even before a general settlement could be made, there were many points of friction between the Agents of the two Governments which with a little good will on each side might be removed.

For instance in the reports received from Mr. Kolokoloff Russian Consul General at Kashgar, there were continual complaints of the unfriendly activity of

(¹) [*cp. infra*, p. 204, No. 193, *encl.*]

Mr. Macartney the British Consul, and it was evident that the Chinese with their customary skill were playing off one official against the other. The evil results of this state of affairs were that fantastic reports were spread on each side of military activity, and the military officers with the Russian outposts in the Pamirs were in a perpetual fever of excitement. He had already on more than one occasion written to Mr. Kolokoloff and urged him to maintain friendly relations with his British Colleague and not to allow himself to be the dupe of Chinese intrigues.

I expressed my approval of the advice given to the Russian Consul General but I thought that the reported activity of Mr. Macartney must be exaggerated as he had occupied his present position for several years and I believed that he had always been on friendly terms with Mr. Petrowsky, the predecessor of the present Consul General.

Mr. Hartwig further drew my attention to an unfriendly article which had appeared in the "*Novoe Vremya*" a few days ago relating to the recent British frontier award in Seistan and stated that certain circles, including some officials of the Ministry of War, were much perturbed at the reports which had been spread that it was now within the power of the British Government to reduce the province of Seistan to an arid desert. The Russian Consul in Seistan who was now on leave, had called on him yesterday and in reply to his enquiry about the frontier award had stated that the delimitation could not have been carried out with greater justice but that the Persians complained that the award regulating the distribution of the waters of the Helmund was not fair since the fertility of the province of Seistan depended on the caprice of one British Engineer whose decision was to be final. Such an arrangement would be sure to cause endless trouble. Another drawback was to be found in the fact that the map showing the delimitation of the Perso-Afghan frontier had only been executed in duplicate, of which one copy had been carried off by Colonel MacMahon and the other had been confided to the Karguzar of Seistan under a promise to keep it secret. He did not understand the motives for such mystery but if the map had been published the Russian Government would have been happy to deny the unfairness of the delimitation and to tell the Persians that they would have to adhere to it.

I told Mr. Hartwig that Colonel MacMahon had anticipated that his frontier award would be accepted with more difficulty by the Afghans than by the Persians and that if the latter now complain of their treatment it is an additional testimony of the fairness of the award. As regards the objections raised to the water award I asked Mr. Hartwig what remedy he would propose.

He at once replied that it was a matter which should be entrusted to a joint commission to regulate, and that it should not be dependent on a single individual who would be exposed to influences of different kinds.

I did not pursue this question further but I strongly suspect that Mr. Hartwig's idea was that the Russian Consul should be a member of the joint commission which he recommended.

My interview ended with a renewed assurance from Mr. Hartwig of his desire to remove all petty cases of friction by friendly co-operation with a view to preparing for an arrangement on broader lines between the two Governments.

I have thought it worth while to report at some length Mr. Hartwig's conversation with me as he plays a considerable rôle at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in all Asiatic questions, is the right hand of Count Lamsdorff and enjoys his complete confidence, but not entirely mine.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have read Sir Arthur Hardinge's despatches which have reached me under flying seal from which it is evident that the refusal of the Persian Government to accept Colonel MacMahon's water award was due to the intrigues of the Russian Legation of which Mr. Hartwig must have been perfectly

aware in our interview, and it is probable that the Shah received encouragement in this course during His Majesty's visit to St. Petersburg when I forwarded by Sir A. Hardinge's request a sealed letter addressed by him to the Ain-ed-Dowleh, of which I did not know the contents, but which I now see contained an appeal to His Highness to accept the award and which may not improbably have been a subject of discussion at Peterhof.

C. H.

September 27, 1905.

No. 193.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 586.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 1, 1905.

My Lord,

R. October 9, 1905.

Two events of interest have occurred during the past week, viz., the return of Monsieur Witte from his mission and the publication of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty.⁽²⁾

M. Witte arrived in St. Petersburg on the 28th ultimo and had no formal reception, a few officials and friends being at the station to meet him. On the following day he was summoned by the Emperor to Biorki [*sic*] where he was received by His Majesty on the Imperial yacht "Polar Star" and had the honour of the title of Count being conferred upon him. Much speculation is rife as to the result of M. Witte's audience with the Emperor William⁽³⁾ and many conjectures are hazarded as to the object of the special honour which has been conferred upon him by the presentation of the Collar of the Red Eagle, which was officially announced in the Russian press as being the Collar of the Black Eagle and was regarded as a very remarkable demonstration of Imperial favour. It is however possible that this distinction has no more significance than the high military order bestowed on General Stoessel on the surrender of Port Arthur, and the desire of the Emperor to enlist the sympathies of a Russian official who is still likely to play a considerable rôle in the future. It is quite certain that whatever may have been the subjects of discussion in Berlin and at Rominten [*sic*]. M. Witte had received no special instructions from the Emperor, and at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs it has since been denied that any arrangement was arrived at. I hear however from a private source that Count Witte has returned intensely gratified with the reception accorded to him by the Emperor William which he describes as the same as that accorded to a sovereign, and with which his reception at Cherbourg compares very unfavourably. He takes credit to himself for the solution of the difference between Germany and France relating to Morocco, and advocates the establishment of close relations between these two countries. Flattered in his vanity by the exceptional honours paid to him by the Emperor William and Prince Bülow, Count Witte, who was previously an open opponent of German influence in Russian policy, has returned to St. Petersburg an enthusiastic admirer of the German Emperor and a warm adherent of a policy of *rapprochement* with Germany.

The publication of the text of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement may, not improbably, have contributed to, or at least facilitated, Count Witte's conversion.

It has not however been received, on the whole, in an unfriendly manner by the

(1) [M. Witte's published statement on August 29, 1905, is given in Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt*, (1925), p. 261. Apparently M. Witte did not yet know of the Treaty of Björko (v. p. 95, No. 91, note). An account of the reception of the Treaty by the Japanese public is given in Sir C. MacDonald, No. 246 of September 26, R. October 30, 1905. This is not reproduced as most of the details were published in the press at the time.]

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 174, *Ed. note*, and p. 182, Nos. 179-80.]

(3) [This was on September 26 and 27 at Rominten. v. G.P. XIX, II, pp. 505-15 and Count Witte: *Mémoires* (1921), pp. 374-80. He states p. 381 that he spoke of the Treaty of Björko with the Emperor William II but only saw the text on reaching St. Petersburg. The Emperor's account, G.P. XIX, II, p. 510, is somewhat different.]

Russian press, the criticisms expressed being in the main reasonable. The effect of its publication had been to a certain extent discounted by the earlier announcements made in the press as to its general tenour, from which it was evident that the reactionary organs were annoyed at the conclusion of the agreement, some of them, such as the "Novoe Vremja," advocating a counter-combination with Germany or America, while the references made in the liberal press have been of a generally friendly character.

The "Russ" which receives inspiration from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and may now be regarded as the organ of that department, holds that the real significance of the agreement depends on the interpretation to be attached to such terms as "Eastern Asia" and "special interests" mentioned in Articles II and IV, and the necessity is indicated of a comprehensive statement of the extent and nature of English aims in Asia. If the policy of England is actuated by peaceful motives and the maintenance of British rights and interests already existing, then no difficulty need be experienced in arriving at an agreement between England and Russia.

Other liberal organs express the hope that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance will prove the futility of further adventures in the Far East and that Russia will henceforward devote her attentions to internal reform and the more pressing problems awaiting solution in Europe and the Near East.

Although the manifestations of ill-humour of the German press have been re-echoed in the "Novoe Vremja" and other reactionary journals, it is fully realised that a Russo-German understanding in Asia as a counterpoise to the Japanese Alliance might jeopardise Russian aspirations in the Near East and would most certainly weaken the Franco-Russian Alliance in Europe.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a summary by Captain Smith of the comments of the principal journals on the Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

Enclosure in No. 193.

Press Comments on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The "Novoe Vremya" after pointing out discrepancies between the two Treaties, maintains that the Alliance is directed against Russia, and that such preponderance of power as it gives to England and Japan in Asia does not make for peace. But, whilst advising a counter political Combination, which will only make peace surer and more lasting if peace be England's real aim, it considers immediate action in this direction would be inadvisable, and would encounter enormous difficulties, although the present time is undoubtedly favourable to preparatory work of this kind. Future Russian Policy must be guided entirely by precise knowledge as to the real aims of the Alliance, and of the "special interests" referred to in Article IV. The evidences apparent of England's willingness to enlighten Russia on this latter point should be taken advantage of.

The "Russ" temperately and in a conciliatory manner, points out that if England, by reason of her Alliance, initiates an aggressive policy in Asia, attempting to draw under her special influence territories formerly outside this sphere, and strives to consolidate her authority over all Southern Asia, from the China Sea to the Persian Gulf inclusive, then it will necessitate fresh military and perhaps even new political Combinations. Again, Russia having no intention of invading India, views with indifference any measures taken by England within the boundaries of her Indian Empire but the same cannot be said of "regions in proximity to the Indian Frontier." For this reason it is highly advisable to remove all ambiguity with reference to Articles II and IV and such terms as "Eastern Asia," & "special interests." It reiterates its oft-expressed opinion that there need be no conflict between Russian and English interests in Asia, and thinks that if England is honestly actuated by peaceful

motives and is striving solely to safeguard only those interests at present existing and which are hers by right, then there is no reason why an understanding should not be arrived at, with a possible agreement based on this ground. But at the present more than any other time the first step in this direction must be made by England and not by Russia. In connection with this it is a fact worthy of note that whilst Continental papers are discussing the advisability and possibility of counter-coalitions, the more serious English papers speak of an Anglo-Russian Agreement. However first and foremost a plain and comprehensive statement of the extent and nature of English claims in Asia is absolutely necessary.

The "Novosti" speaks in warmest terms of the letter dated 6 Sep[tember], 1905, and considers that read in conjunction with the Treaty and the comments of the leading English journals on the subject of an Anglo-Russian Agreement it proves the sincerity of England's desire for peace. Warning Russian Politicians of the dangers besetting them at present, it urges wariness lest they commit an irreparable mistake. Whilst fully recognising Germany's good offices and hoping for a long continuance of the existing relations between Germany and Russia, it quotes facts to prove that it is not to the latter's advantage to share Germany's quarrels with England, and frankly states that there is more danger to be apprehended by joining an Anti-British Coalition than from an Anglo-Russian Agreement, for which it has always been a strong advocate.

The "Slovo" characteristically, regrets the lost opportunities of an Alliance with Japan and stigmatises the signature of a Treaty by a Christian England, a great white European Power, with a heathen Japan, a yellow Asiatic Power, as the consummation of an unnatural crime against Russia, Europe, and the whole civilised World. Considers the Alliance as an impudent attempt to place the whole Asiatic continent under a Doctrine similar to the Monroe Doctrine, established by another branch of the Anglo-Saxon race in the New World. An attempt best answered by a Coalition of France, Germany, and Russia.

The local German newspapers state that the Alliance affects Russian interests throughout the whole of Asia, and consider that as an outcome of this Treaty there may be a delimitation of English and Russian spheres of Influence in Asia. At present Russia is, and for many years to come will remain helpless, except by combining with other European Powers in an Anti-British Coalition.

St. Petersburg, 1905, (3 October).

No. 194.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 296.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 3, 1905.

The Russian Ambassador called upon me today on his return to London, and we had a very amicable conversation upon various subjects.

His Excellency asked me how I thought we stood with regard to the possibility of arriving at an understanding between the two Powers. He said that our new Treaty with Japan had undoubtedly come rather as a shock to the Russian public. On the other hand, the feeling of the Government was not unfriendly, and he mentioned in particular Count Lamsdorff's readiness to discuss the question of such an understanding. His Excellency doubted however whether it would be prudent to say too much upon the subject at this moment. He was himself about to leave almost immediately for Copenhagen, after which he would pay a short visit to Russia. He would then have an opportunity of consulting with Count Lamsdorff, and would be in

a better position to explain the ideas of the Russian Government when he came back.

His Excellency referred with much satisfaction to the tone of the English newspapers, and particularly to the article which appeared in the "Times" of yesterday—an article which, as I reminded him, was founded upon information supplied to the "Times" by its St. Petersburg Correspondent, and apparently derived from official sources. I said that I had not yet had any opportunity of discussing this important question with the Prime Minister. I felt sure, however, that he would be as ready as I was to approach in the most friendly spirit such a negotiation as that at which His Excellency had hinted. My own feeling was that it would be a mistake to attempt too much, or to allow it to be understood that the two countries were on the eve of a comprehensive transaction analogous to that which had taken place between France and Great Britain. My idea of the procedure to be followed was rather that we should take up in detail any outstanding points as to which differences of opinion had manifested themselves and endeavour to dispose of these, and that we should then pass on to others, if we found that our work proceeded successfully.

I had in my mind, although I did not refer to it, the question of the relations between Russian and Afghan officials, which His Excellency and I had on more than one occasion discussed before the war broke out.

I ended by saying that, in the meanwhile, I thought it satisfactory that we should be working together harmoniously in Crete, and also in regard to the Macedonian question.

Count Benckendorff expressed agreement with what I had said, and said that he would repeat the substance of our conversation to Count Lamsdorff.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

No. 195.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 594.) Very Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 4, 1905.

My Lord,

R. October 9, 1905.

The French Ambassador called upon me this afternoon and told me that he had had an interview with Count Witte whom he found filled with an exaggerated idea of the rôle which he had lately played in international politics at Portsmouth, completely under the impression of his recent reception in Germany,⁽¹⁾ and in a state of rabid irritation over the Anglo-Japanese alliance. He told Monsieur Bompard that it was absolutely necessary that the Powers should make a reply to the Anglo-Japanese agreement, that it should be met by a Franco-Russian and German coalition, and that he had urged this at Berlin, where he found Germany a strong partisan of the Dual Alliance. Monsieur Bompard replied that, although it might suit Germany for the time being to be a partisan of the Dual Alliance, in this case it was not likely that the coalition he suggested would be realised, since no advantage would be gained from it by France who enjoyed friendly relations with England, against whom the coalition was apparently (to be ?) directed.⁽²⁾

Monsieur Bompard told me that the French Government were anxious as to the situation here and as to the possibility of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, that Count Lamsdorff was very reserved whenever he alluded to the Anglo-Japanese agreement, and that Count Witte must now be regarded as absolutely

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 202-3, No. 193.]

⁽²⁾ [*ib.* and p. 204, *encl.*]

German in his sympathies and as a dangerous element for the future. Owing to the anxiety of the French Government he had been obliged to defer taking leave, and as he gathered that his Government anticipated that His Majesty's Government would make some move towards the establishment of more friendly relations with the Russian Government in which they would be able to co-operate, he asked me if I was aware of any such project being in view.

I replied that although I knew that Your Lordship had a sincere desire for friendly relations with Russia and for the settlement of all questions pending between the two countries, I had received no instructions to formally raise the question, and in my own opinion to do so at the present moment would be premature and might tend to frustrate the object in view. As regards the possibility of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, it was difficult to see what advantage Russia would gain in the Far East where Germany is powerless, while Russian interests and aspirations would necessarily suffer from such an alliance in the Near East. So long as France maintained her present attitude any coalition proposed by Germany would be almost certain to end in failure.

Monsieur Bompard asked me whether a coalition between Russia, Germany and the United States was possible, to which I replied that it appeared to me in the highest degree improbable in view of President Roosevelt's relations with both England and Japan and of his attitude towards the question of the "open door" which both Powers were pledged to maintain.

Later in the afternoon I saw Count Lamsdorff at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, the conversation having turned to the Russian press, I remarked that I was on the whole very satisfied with the attitude assumed by the Russian press towards the Anglo-Japanese agreement, and that the criticisms made had been reasonable and not generally unfriendly. As however the press in Russia cannot be regarded as an indication of the attitude of the Government. I begged him to tell me quite frankly, and unofficially if he wished, the real opinion of the Government on the subject of the Anglo-Japanese agreement.

Count Lamsdorff expressed the desire that our conversation should be regarded as unofficial and of a private character and proceeded to inform me that the Agreement had created a most unfavourable impression in Government circles, that the fact of its being aimed at Russia could not possibly be denied, and that the Russian Government resented the introduction of a third Power like Japan in questions which did not concern her, but which affected England and Russia in Central Asia. Had there been no such treaty the moment of the conclusion of peace would have been a most favourable opportunity for the settlement of all questions pending between England and Russia which he himself had always ardently desired, but that the hostile criticism provoked by the new treaty precluded such a possibility at present.

I replied to Count Lamsdorff that I must remind him of the friendly assurances that I had already given him on Your Lordship's behalf, but that even if the agreement was aimed at Russia which I would not admit as conclusive, its defensive character could not possibly be denied. As he had spoken to me frankly I would do the same to him in discussing that part of the agreement to which he had referred and to which he seemed to take special exception. While insisting on the fact that the agreement was a form of national insurance against a condition of affairs which I trusted would never arise, I called his attention to what had been going on in Central Asia during the past ten years. There, a system of railways of purely strategic importance had been built by the Russian Government at the cost of great sacrifices and had been brought down to the frontier of Afghanistan, which the Russian Government had repeatedly declared to be outside their sphere of influence, and to the very gates of Herat. If it were asked against whom these preparations were directed the only possible reply was that they were intended to facilitate an attack on Afghanistan or India. I had never believed that any person connected with the Russian Government seriously contemplated the invasion of India, but there was no doubt that it was intended that there should be a perpetual means of exerting pressure upon England by military movements

on the Afghan frontier in the event of any cause for disagreement or any incident arising, whether in the Near East, the North Sea or elsewhere. Such a situation would resemble that of Turkey and the Great Powers with their naval demonstrations, and would constitute a standing menace to India. As England had no pretension to be a military Power with forces on a continental scale, she was fully justified in taking steps to assure her frontiers from attack and to ensure the *status quo* in Asia, while herself harbouring no aggressive intentions.

Count Lamsdorff did not refute my statement but argued that when an agreement had been arrived at between the two countries no reasons for discord or menace would exist, and that it was hardly fair to state that the Russian railways in Central Asia were for purely strategic purposes.

I did not pursue this point further but I asked Count Lamsdorff whether, in his private opinion, he considered the question of the resumption of negotiations with a view to the settlement of outstanding differences as inopportune for the time being or as indefinitely deferred, and I remarked that, although there might be disadvantage in being too precipitate, I could see no reason for the latter view.

Count Lamsdorff replied that, in spite of all present impressions and speculative eventualities, he was still sincerely desirous of placing the relations between England and Russia on a firm and friendly basis, but that he considered that it would be a mistake to attempt at the present moment the resumption of the previous negotiations. He thought however that both Governments should endeavour to settle between them in a friendly manner such questions as could be dealt with singly so as to convince public opinion of the advantages to be obtained from friendly relations and thus to prepare the way for the settlement of all outstanding differences. He warned me at the same time that systematic and untiring efforts were being made here to render impossible the attainment of the object which we had in view.

I thanked Count Lamsdorff for his frankness and he begged once more that what he had said might be regarded as unofficial.

It appears to me that Count Lamsdorff has to a certain extent fallen under the influence of Count Witte who makes no effort to conceal his anger at the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese agreement, and that he is now more outspoken in his objections than when he last spoke to me a fortnight ago. The annoyance which is felt is, I believe, due to the knowledge that the weapon of offence, which has been forged with so much care and outlay for use in Central Asia, has lost its edge, thus bearing the highest testimony to the value of the extended form of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.⁽⁴⁾

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most interesting dispatch!

E.R.

⁽⁴⁾ [Language approved by Lord Lansdowne in No. 305 of October 11 to Sir C. Hardinge.]

No. 196.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 300.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1905.

During the course of a long conversation with the Russian Ambassador this afternoon I recurred to the possibility of an amicable arrangement between Great Britain and Russia of the kind which we had discussed on the 3rd instant (see my

despatch No. 296 of that date).⁽¹⁾ I told His Excellency that I was about to leave for Balmoral where I should see the King and the Prime Minister, and that I was extremely anxious to be exactly aware of His Excellency's views. He repeated to me that he believed the Russian Government and an influential section of the Russian public to be strongly in favour of such an understanding. His own view however was that the matter should not be too much pressed at the present moment. Although our Treaty with Japan had not been badly taken, it had undoubtedly come as a shock to public opinion in Russia, and in His Excellency's opinion it would be better to give time for the effect to pass off. He would visit St. Petersburg in November, and would take an opportunity of more fully ascertaining Count Lamsdorff's views. It would then be possible for us to resume our conversation.

His Excellency volunteered the statement that, in his view, the Persian question was the only one presenting serious difficulties. He did not however see why we should not be able to come to terms with regard to it. Russia did not want to annex Persian territory or to acquire a port on the Persian Gulf, although she might want a *débouché* for her trade in those waters. I said that neither had we any desire to encroach upon the integrity of Persia, and that our policy as to foreign commerce was well known. I should be quite ready to discuss the Persian question with His Excellency whenever he was ready to do so.

His Excellency added that he had only one more observation to make, viz. that any arrangement of the kind should not be conceived in a spirit of hostility towards Germany. I said that nothing was further from my thoughts: I failed altogether to see why such an understanding as we both desired should contain any element of hostility either towards Germany or towards any other Power. I thought it most unfortunate that some people's minds should be so constituted as to make them see, in every neighbourly arrangement arrived at between two or more Powers, a coalition aimed at another.

His Excellency ended by expressing a hope that I would authorise you to take a suitable opportunity, perhaps while His Excellency was in St. Petersburg, to speak to Count Lamsdorff somewhat in the sense of the remarks which I had made.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 204-5, No. 194.]

No. 197.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 604.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 8, 1905.

R. October 14, 1905.

During the past few days articles have appeared in the "*Novoe Vremja*," a journal notorious for its Anglophobia, in which it is pointed out that no counter-combination to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is in the present disposition of the Powers possible, and that, the aim of the new Treaty of alliance being to maintain peace and to prevent aggressive designs in Eastern and Central Asia, Russia and other interested Powers should agree to the maintenance of the *status quo*, provided that guarantees in the same sense were given by England and Japan.⁽¹⁾

These articles have been the subject of favourable comment in the English press, and have certainly been the means of affecting a *détente* in the relations of the press of the two countries, but I have not considered it necessary to send translations

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 202-4, No. 193 and *encl.*]

to Your Lordship since the views of the Russian press do not necessarily represent the views of the Russian Government, and I do not wish to attach undue importance to newspaper articles which the French Ambassador told me in confidence had been directly inspired by the French Embassy. They may however be regarded as pleasing indications of our friendly relations with France and of the desire of the French Government for an amicable understanding between England and Russia.

The action of the French Embassy must not be regarded as entirely disinterested, since it is inspired by anxiety on the part of the French Government lest the sequel to the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement should be a *rapprochement* of Germany and Russia. Monsieur Bompard has twice within the last week suggested to me that His Majesty's Government should make some advance to the Russian Government in order to show their conciliatory disposition, and should propose that Russia and the other Powers interested in China should be invited to adhere to a declaration of their intention to maintain the independence and integrity of China and the principle of the "open door" as defined in the preamble of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty,⁽²⁾ this being the only common ground of agreement between England, Russia and the other Powers. He had already made this suggestion to his Government, and Your Lordship may consequently have cognisance of it. The object of this step, as M. Bompard explained to me, would be to forestall any action on the part of Germany and to frustrate any overtures for a Russo-German combination in the Far East which the Russian Government might be disposed to accept as a salve to their wounded *amour-propre* if His Majesty's Government held aloof. He fully realised that the moment was not yet ripe for the resumption of the previous negotiations which had been interrupted by the war.

Although it is impossible to know whether any negotiations are in progress between Russia and Germany relating to the Far East or elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine that even Count Witte with his present Germanophil tendencies would advocate co-operation with Germany in the Far East, in a sense contrary to the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, after the disastrous experiences of the Russian Government in the Manchurian adventure, which was inspired and precipitated by the German adventure at Kiao-Chao. In the near East, German and Russian interests are in direct conflict, and with the lapse of time this divergence is likely to become more acute, but it is essential for Russia, especially at the present moment of internal disturbance, to maintain friendly relations with her western neighbour. I have pointed out these considerations to M. Bompard who appears very nervous as to the possible action of Germany, but whether his anxiety is well founded or not time alone can shew.

It appears to me however to be doubtful whether the French Ambassador's suggestion, if carried out, would be of any practical utility or advantage to His Majesty's Government unless the proposed declaration were of wider scope embracing the maintenance of the *status quo* in Asia, and unless it were made by England and Japan conjointly, since a separate and isolated communication by England would tend to impair the solidarity which should exist between the two Allies. The Russian Government, in their adherence to the Anglo-German agreement of 1900, affirmed that the integrity of the Chinese Empire constituted the fundamental principle of their policy in China, and in reply to Mr. Hay's Circular of 1901 they announced their acceptance of the principle of the "open door." A reaffirmation of these principles would hardly be worth more than the previous declarations.

I would also point out that if an international declaration asserting the principles of the maintenance of the independence and integrity of China and of the "open door" were made by the Powers especially interested in the Far East, the Anglo-Japanese agreement might become depreciated in the eyes of the Japanese, since it would no doubt be argued that some of its most important provisions, affecting chiefly Japan, had been guaranteed by the Powers, while the obligations of Japan towards

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 165, No. 155.]

England in Central Asia remained binding without any corresponding guarantee. This might possibly have the effect of making the Treaty appear to the Japanese one-sided and burdensome, although in reality there is a wide difference between a platonic declaration and an agreement which two Powers bind themselves to maintain by force of arms.

An alternative course which would not present the same objections as that suggested by the French Ambassador would be a joint communication by England and Japan to all the Powers interested in the Far East stating in approximately the same words as in the preamble of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement that the object of the Treaty is the maintenance and consolidation of the general peace throughout Asia, the preservation of the common interests of all the Powers, the independence and integrity of existing Asiatic Governments and the principles of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations.

Such a communication made jointly by the two Allies would strengthen and not weaken the force and authority of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. It would have an eminently pacificatory effect on the world at large, and in view of the frequent assurances made by the Russian Government with regard both to Afghanistan and Persia could hardly fail to elicit a satisfactory reply from Russia on the general principle.

Finally, if it should be considered desirable by His Majesty's Government to make a friendly advance towards Russia in this or in any other sense, it would be as well to combine it with the negotiations, which, I learn from a private source, are in progress for the issue of part of a Russian loan in London, since the natural desire of the Russian Government to place their paper on the English market will help to facilitate such an understanding as would have a reassuring effect on the British financial public.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTES.

The communication which Sir C. Hardinge suggests might be made jointly by G[reat] Britain and Japan would, as far as Russia is concerned, be almost a repetition of the communication already made at St. Petersburg by Sir C. Hardinge.

W. L.

But this was less formal than what Sir C. Hardinge advocates.

F. A. C.

14.10.

I agree with Sir Charles Hardinge that there would be no advantage in volunteering an announcement which would in effect merely be an iteration of the Preamble of the Treaty. A joint communication on the part of Great Britain and Japan inviting a general acceptance of the status quo in Asia might be worth considering, but we shall have to be extremely careful how we make such a proposal to the Japanese Government, who would probably regard it with no little suspicion. They would certainly ask what was meant by "the maintenance of the status quo in Asia," or by "the preservation of the independence and integrity of existing Asiatic Governments."

For the moment however the Russian Government do not seem to be ready to receive any such overtures, and it will be better to take no further action at present.

The financial negotiations to which Sir Charles Hardinge refers in the last paragraph of his despatch must, I think, be allowed to take their course independently of any negotiations having reference to political affairs.

L.

Oct. 17, 1905.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 616.) Very Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 14, 1905.

R. October 18, 1905.

The French Ambassador left for Paris to-day. Before leaving he had a conversation with Count Lamsdorff on the subject of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement and he has kindly given me the following account of what passed between them.

Count Lamsdorff showed great reluctance to discuss the question and it was only on Monsieur Bompard insisting that it was a matter of interest to France as the Ally of Russia to know his views that he consented to disclose them. He spoke at first in somewhat strong terms of the Anglo-Japanese agreement which, he said, had in spite of the pacificatory explanation which accompanied it shocked Russia by the directness of its intention. Previous to the outbreak of war England had been in negotiation with Russia on many pending questions in Asia and these discussions had been necessarily interrupted on the commencement of hostilities. Before even the war had been concluded England, regardless of her previous negotiations, had changed the whole situation and had endeavoured to impose her will and that of Japan upon the remaining Powers in Asia. This proceeding had caused deep dissatisfaction not merely in Russia but also in Germany and the United States.⁽¹⁾ England had repeated in Asia the same policy which she had followed in Africa and had caused such a shock to the whole world that it became necessary to put an end to such proceedings once and for all. The way to do so would be to form a coalition of Powers, which need not have an aggressive character, as a counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, in the same manner that the political equilibrium of Europe was maintained by the Dual and Triple Alliances, and a combination of Russia, France, Germany, and the United States would serve that purpose.

Monsieur Bompard replied that if Russia had really a grievance as to the manner in which England and Japan by their agreement sought to impose their will in Asia, France might equally claim to be aggrieved, but that there could be no possible question of France entering into any coalition with Russia and Germany after the treatment recently experienced by France at the hands of the latter Power. He reminded Count Lamsdorff that the action of Germany in Morocco, of which the object had been to detach France from England, had only served to draw them closer together, and that any counter-combination would necessarily tend to consolidate the Anglo-Japanese alliance. The only course for other Powers to follow was to assimilate their action to that of England and Japan and to publicly adopt the principles enunciated in the preamble of the agreement affirming its object to be the maintenance of the independence and integrity of China and of the principle of the "open door." This would harmonise with the announcement made by Russia and France in 1902 in reply to the first Anglo-Japanese Treaty. As regards Central Asia the matter was one which concerned only England and Russia. It was evident that the policy of England had been to guarantee her position in that part of Asia, but that there was no indication of any aggressive intention on her part and consequently no reason why an agreement should not be arrived at between the two Powers.

Count Lamsdorff stated in reply that there could at present be no question of resuming the previous negotiations, since a new and entirely different situation had been introduced by the intrusion of a third Power, but he frankly admitted that the Anglo-Japanese agreement had apparently no aggressive intent, and that therefore there was no immediate danger to be foreseen and no pressing necessity for any action being taken. At the present moment all that was known of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was the text, but the important part to know was the spirit in

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Lord Lansdowne: "This is quite unsupported by evidence."]

which it would be carried out. Time could only show this and what, if any, action was necessary by the other Powers to counteract its effects. He admitted that the German Emperor was making strenuous efforts to induce the Russian Government to take some definite step in connection with the agreement.

Monsieur Bompard told me that the impression left upon his mind was that Count Lamsdorff regarded him in this matter as the advocate of England, and that in the earlier part of his conversation he had been to a certain extent "bluffing," but that Germany was making a serious endeavour to inveigle Russia into some sort of agreement or undertaking to which Count Lamsdorff was personally unfavourably disposed. Count Lamsdorff would, he considers, in view of the ideal of a Russo-German-French-American coalition being unrealisable, prefer to remain with his hands free and to await further developments, since any sort of agreement with Germany might prove prejudicial to the French alliance and might place Russia in a false position. The question however was whether Count Lamsdorff would be strong enough to resist the pressure which might be placed upon him by the two Emperors.

Monsieur Bompard laid stress on what Count Lamsdorff had said to him respecting the dissatisfaction of the United States Government with the Anglo-Japanese agreement, more especially as it was the second time that Count Lamsdorff referred to it in conversation with him. The danger of such an attitude on the part of the United States Government would consist in the fact that Russia might be disposed to enter into a coalition with Germany and the United States while she would be unwilling to enter into an agreement with Germany alone.

I replied that as far as I knew there had been no indication of any ill-will on the part of the United States, and that it seemed to me very improbable in view of the repeated declarations of the American Government of their desire for the independence and integrity of China and for equal opportunity for the trade of all nations which the Anglo-Japanese agreement was designed to maintain.

Monsieur Bompard asked that what he had told me might be regarded as confidential.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE.

This is an important conversation.

We have had no indication of the views of the U[nited] S[tates] Gov[ernmen]t resp[ectin]g the Anglo-Japanese Agreement since they received the text, but when the substance was communicated to the President, he appeared quite satisfied.

Note that C[oun]t Lamsdorff says there can be no question of resuming the previous Anglo-Russian negotiations at present; and that the German Emperor is making great efforts to induce the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to take some action.

F. A. C.
18 Oct.
L.

No. 199.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 662.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 17, 1905.

The French Ambassador told me today that, during his visit to Paris, M. Nelidoff had spoken to him with much frankness as to the possibility of an understanding between Great Britain and Russia. Such an understanding was earnestly desired by M. Nelidoff himself and by Count Lamsdorff. They feared however that the matter could not be much advanced at the present time. The resentment created in Russia

by the recently concluded Anglo-Japanese Agreement was deeper than would be supposed from the language used by the Russian Press. We had, M. Cambon observed, fortunately taken the precaution of explaining our policy to the Russian Government in the most considerate terms,⁽¹⁾ and we had thereby disarmed a good deal of hostile criticism. The feeling of hostility nevertheless existed and must be taken into account. For this reason both M. Nelidoff and Count Lamsdorff were not in favour of an early discussion. On the other hand, Germany was taking advantage of the opportunity in order, if possible, to estrange France and England. M. Witte, upon whom his interview with the German Emperor had produced a great effect, was working strenuously for this purpose, and it was suggested that, as Great Britain and Japan had formed a coalition which would give them a preponderating influence in Eastern Asia, the time had come for the other Powers interested in that part of the world to form another coalition by which the balance of power might be maintained. In these circumstances His Excellency could not help thinking that we should do well to be prepared for an exchange of views with the Russian Government at the earliest possible moment. As to this, M. Nelidoff had suggested, and His Excellency thought the suggestion a valuable one, that His Majesty's Government should consider in good time the requirements which would be put forward on behalf of Great Britain whenever the moment arrived for opening negotiations. It was, His Excellency said, Great Britain which had constantly complained of Russian encroachments, and we ought to be in a position to define clearly the grounds of our complaint and the terms which we could afford to accept.

His Excellency referred briefly to the relations of this country with Russia in regard to Afghanistan, Persia and the Near East. I said that in regard to Afghanistan we had already defined our position with considerable distinctness. We had laid it down—and I did not believe that Russia would dispute our contention—that the external relations of Afghanistan must remain under the direction of this country. We had, on the other hand, indicated our readiness to enter into arrangements which would provide for the prompt settlement, by direct negotiation between the Russian and Afghan frontier officials, of purely local disputes having no serious political importance. As to Persia, it seemed to me that the main object should be to put an end to the unfortunate rivalry of the two Powers whom the Persian Government invariably endeavoured to play off against one another, and we of course desired that an equal opportunity should be afforded to our commerce in Persian territory. As for the Near East, I thought it was for Russia, rather than for us, to indicate what she wanted.

I told His Excellency that I had already had an informal discussion with Count Benckendorff, who had given me an account of his views not dissimilar from that just given to me by His Excellency.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

(1) [v. *supra*, pp. 172–9, Nos. 164–172 (b).]

No. 200.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 330.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 20, 1905.

Count Benckendorff asked to see me this morning, and told me that he had been instructed to speak frankly to me with regard to a very serious matter which had recently come to the knowledge of the Russian Government. They had learned from a trustworthy source that during the war, and since the conclusion of peace, negotiations, of which His Majesty's Government were fully cognizant, if they were not actually

parties to them, had been on foot between Japan and Turkey with the object of bringing about co-operation between those two Powers at Constantinople and extending the scope of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement to the Near East.

I told His Excellency that the Russian Government had apparently discovered a mare's nest of prodigious dimensions. No proposal of the kind had ever been on the tapis, nor, to the best of my belief, had such an idea ever been discussed in this country even in unofficial circles. I could not help wondering at the credulity of the Russian Government, and I asked His Excellency whether the terms of the recently concluded Anglo-Japanese Agreement ought not in themselves to have been sufficient to show that neither of the Contracting Parties were likely to encourage a scheme so inconsistent with the carefully limited provisions of that Agreement. I also reminded His Excellency that, when communicating the new Treaty to the Russian Government, you had been instructed to assure them that there were no secret clauses attached to it. His Excellency said that he did not recollect that you had given such an assurance with regard to the absence of secret clauses. He was however greatly relieved by my statement. I asked him whether it was not clear that these rumours were the fabrication of some "agent provocateur" who desired to sow distrust between us.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 201.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 623.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 21, 1905.

R. October 31, 1905.

Since I had the honour to address to Your Lordship my despatch No. 616 of the 14th instant⁽¹⁾ reporting the substance of a conversation between the French Ambassador and Count Lamsdorff, the political situation here has been to a certain extent modified, owing chiefly, I believe, to the language held by Monsieur Bompard on that occasion.

There is, I think, little doubt that Count Lamsdorff was personally unfavourably disposed to any sort of agreement or undertaking with Germany as a counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese alliance, but being partially under the influence of Count Witte and perhaps acting on instructions from the Emperor, he proposed to the French Ambassador an anti-English coalition with the hope, or even knowledge, that his proposal would be flatly rejected. Monsieur Bompard's uncompromising attitude has evidently sufficed to convince those who harboured unfriendly intentions towards England that the French Government would not countenance them for an instant, and I am reliably informed that the idea of any combination with Germany has now been definitely dropped. This result is all the more satisfactory in view of the fact that, as I hear from a good source, the removal of Count Lamsdorff formed an important item of the German programme, to which the Imperial Rescript of the 19th instant and the high decoration conferred upon Count Lamsdorff afford a satisfactory and reassuring reply.

The extravagantly Germanophil attitude of Count Witte since his return has also shown some modification during the past few days, and he has openly stated that there is now no question of an alliance with Germany and that he is in favour of a policy of friendly isolation of Russia while maintaining the best possible relations with all Foreign Powers and relying upon the French alliance as the corner-stone of Russian policy.

At an interview which I had with Count Lamsdorff yesterday the change in his

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 211-2, No. 198.]

attitude was very marked and his manner was far more friendly than it has been since the communication of the text of the Anglo-Japanese agreement.

He referred with evident satisfaction to Your Lordship's conversations with Count Benckendorff, on October 3 and 5⁽²⁾ relating to Anglo-Russian relations, and on my observing that the tenour of our conversation on the 4th instant (reported in my despatch No. 594 of the same date)⁽³⁾ was almost exactly analogous he remarked that it was a confirmation of the friendly intentions actuating both Governments and was of happy augury for the future.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 204-5, No. 194, and pp. 207-8, No. 196.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 205-7, No. 195.]

No. 202.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 639.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 24, 1905.

R. October 31, 1905.

When I announced to Count Lamsdorff a few days ago my intention to leave St. Petersburg tomorrow on leave of absence I told him that as it was a long time since I had had the honour of being received by the Emperor I thought that perhaps His Majesty might care to see me in case he should have any message or communication which he would like me to convey to the King.

Count Lamsdorff replied at once that he was sure that the Emperor would like to see me before I left and an audience of His Majesty was promptly fixed for today at Peterhof.

On being received in private audience by the Emperor I at once conveyed to His Majesty a message which I had received from the King expressing the warmth of his personal sentiments towards him, His Majesty's most earnest desire that the best and most durable relations should be established between England and Russia, and that all important points should be discussed in an amicable spirit and settled as soon as possible. I at the same time added that the King watched with interest the internal reforms which the Emperor had introduced and was about to grant and that a liberal policy would be of the greatest advantage both to the Emperor himself and the Russian people.

At the same time I endeavoured to impress upon the Emperor the sincere desire of His Majesty's Government to maintain friendly relations with Russia, and I pointed out that complete unanimity prevailed in England on this subject, since it constitutes part of the policy not only of the Government but also of the Opposition, while the press without exception was favourably disposed towards the idea. As evidence of the change of sentiment which had taken place I cited the presence in St. Petersburg of Lord Revelstoke who, with the countenance of His Majesty's Government, was endeavouring to negotiate with an international group of bankers a loan to the Russian Government. I added that His Majesty's Government considered, and their opinion was shared by Count Lamsdorff, that in endeavouring to arrive at a settlement of all questions in dispute it would be better not to embark on an ambitious programme but to deal with each question separately until all existing difficulties had been finally removed. The points of difference between the two countries were after all few in number and not of a nature to render agreement impossible. I assured the Emperor that His Majesty's Government entertained no aggressive designs and no desire nor intention of extending the British frontiers beyond their present limits.

The Emperor expressed himself as very gratified at receiving the King's friendly message and as being very desirous of arriving at a friendly agreement with England on all matters in dispute. He assured me that I might accept his word that neither he nor the Russian people desired a policy of expansion or extension of the Russian frontiers, that since both Powers were agreed on the maintenance of the integrity of Persia, all questions connected with Persia should be settled without delay and that the only difficulties which could present themselves would be technical difficulties such as spheres of influence &c., which should be easily adjusted.

I remarked to the Emperor that in the event of an agreement being concluded between England and Russia it was to be hoped that it would not be regarded as directed against any other Power, as has unfortunately been the case with regard to the Anglo-French Agreement and Morocco, that the desire for peace was deeply ingrained in the English people and that without seeking alliances in Europe England was anxious to be on friendly terms with all nations.

The Emperor expressed his assent and observed that he had never understood why the Anglo-French Agreement had been regarded in Germany as directed against that country and added that he regarded the recent revelations in the "Matin" as purely imaginary.

Referring to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement His Majesty made a curious statement to the effect that objection had been taken to it by certain people in Russia as constituting a breach of neutrality, since the Agreement was signed before the conclusion of peace, and it was thought that this fact had given encouragement and moral support to the Japanese. He himself had not shared this view, but there were many who held it.

I told His Majesty that such an idea appeared to me to be very far-fetched, since in one of the Articles of the Agreement it was expressly stated that it was not to apply to the recently concluded war, that negotiations had been in progress since the month of April, and that it was a mere coincidence that the Agreement had been signed a few days before the conclusion of peace. It proved however to have been a fortunate coincidence since it enabled the Japanese to make peace on terms that were acceptable to Russia while without the safety assured to them by the Agreement they would probably have preferred to continue the war. I alluded at the same time to the happy impression produced by the Emperor's recent Manifesto.

The audience lasted nearly an hour during which the Emperor was pleased to discuss many other subjects of secondary importance, but before dismissing me His Majesty asked me to convey a very friendly message to the King expressing his entire acquiescence with the desires expressed in the King's message and giving an assurance that the King could rely on him.

Altogether the impression left on my mind by the interview was of a favourable nature, for the Emperor gave me a positive assurance that he was opposed to a policy of expansion and appeared to reciprocate the desire for the maintenance of friendly relations between the two countries. In talking over the incidents which arose during the war he showed no rancour, nor in his reference to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement did he show any sign of ill-humour. The improvement which has already shown itself in the relations between England and Russia only requires careful fostering to bear fruit in due season.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 680.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 25, 1905.

The French Ambassador referred again today to the relations of Great Britain and Russia, about which he had spoken to me on the 17th instant (see my despatch No. 662 of that date).⁽¹⁾ His Excellency said that he had been at Paris since I had last seen him, and had had interesting conversations both with M. Nelidoff and with M. Bompard, who happened to be there. He had gathered from their statements that the prospects of an understanding were rather less favourable than he had imagined. Count Lamsdorff was as well disposed as ever towards this country, and so far as the Russian Government were concerned there was no serious difficulty. But the Emperor had to be reckoned with, and there could be no doubt that he was at this moment much under the influence of the German Emperor, who was in constant correspondence with him and who, on the occasion of the interview between the two Sovereigns at Bjoerkoe, had succeeded in convincing him that this country was actuated by a feeling of hostility towards Russia. An attempt was evidently being made to bring about an arrangement under which France, Russia and Germany would combine as a counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. M. Nelidoff had indeed quite recently suggested an idea of this kind to M. Rouvier, by whom he had been told that there could be no question of French participation in such a project. M. Cambon felt sure that the suggestion had been made by Count Lamsdorff's orders, and with the anticipation that it would elicit a refusal.⁽²⁾ The moral of all this, His Excellency said, was that this country should watch for a good opportunity of re-establishing friendly relations with Russia. It was not, in his view, a case for suddenly proposing a comprehensive settlement of outstanding questions, but rather for finding a good excuse to commence an amicable conversation about some subject which obviously required to be dealt with without loss of time. His Excellency thought that such an opportunity might be found in connection with the proposal of the German Emperor that the Powers should withdraw the international troops now stationed in Northern China. At this point His Excellency described to me at some length the manner in which this proposal had been made to the French Government. The German Emperor had telegraphed to President Loubet in the following terms:—

“L'ordre ayant été restauré en Asie par la conclusion de la paix, je propose de faire rentrer les troupes de couverture qui se trouvent échelonnées dans la province de Tschili. Le mode d'évacuation serait fixé par les commandants des contingents en conseil et aura lieu d'un commun accord.

“S[a] M[ajesté] l'Impératrice de Chine est informée.

“Les gardes des Légations à Pékin resteront.”

This message had been received by the President when he was on the point of starting for Spain, and he had returned an answer in the following terms from Hendaye:—

“Je remercie Votre Majesté de sa communication. J'en fais part au Gouvernement qui en délibérera pour l'échange de vues auquel Elle propose de procéder entre les Puissances intéressées.”

I then informed His Excellency of the purport of the telegram which had been received by King Edward, of the terms of His Majesty's reply, and of my conversation

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 212–3, No. 199.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 205–6, No. 195, and p. 214, No. 201.]

with the German Ambassador on the 24th instant.⁽³⁾ His Excellency thought that, as the question of retaining international troops in Northern China might be regarded as having some connection with the independence of the Chinese Empire, to the recognition of which both Great Britain and Russia were committed, the British and Russian Governments might well discuss the question. I said that I had intended to speak to Count Benckendorff on the subject, and that I would certainly do so.

His Excellency told me that he believed that Russia was a good deal disturbed by the references contained in the Anglo-Japanese Treaty to the "special interests" of Great Britain and Japan.⁽⁴⁾ Those special interests were not clearly defined in the Preamble. I said that I thought that the nature of those special interests was sufficiently indicated in the Articles which followed. Ours had particular reference to India; those of Japan to Corea. His Excellency dwelt upon the fact that the Treaty of Portsmouth, while admitting that Corea was to be under the paramount influence of Japan, recognised that it still maintained its existence as an independent State.⁽⁵⁾ He was anxious to know whether Great Britain intended to have a Representative at Seoul. He felt sure that France would also be ready to maintain one, and he believed that such a step would go far towards reassuring Russia. I promised His Excellency that I would carefully consider the suggestion which he had made.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

(3) [This conversation is described in a despatch to Sir F. Lascelles No. 277 of October 24, 1905. F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1615. Its substance is sufficiently indicated by the summary given above.]

(4) [*v. supra*, pp. 165-7, No. 155, para. (c) of Preamble and Articles III and IV.]

(5) [*v. supra*, p. 108, No. 101, Article II.]

III.—THE RAPPROCHEMENT UNDER THE NEW BRITISH ADMINISTRATION, DECEMBER 1905—MAY 1906.

No. 204.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 427.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 13, 1905.

In conversation with the Russian Ambassador today, I said that I had hoped that an Agreement might be reached between Great Britain and Russia with regard to outstanding questions in which both countries were interested. The Ambassador said that he was himself responsible for any negotiations of this kind having been suspended, but he had felt that it was quite impossible to make any progress with them while things in Russia were in their present condition. I said I felt that that must be so, and that of course I should not press any question at this moment, but that, during this inevitable delay, it would be the policy of our Government not to do anything which would make the resumption of negotiations or a settlement more difficult later on. The Ambassador expressed great satisfaction at this, and asked if he might inform his Government of what I had said, to which I readily agreed.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, January 3, 1906.

Dillon called on me on the 1st with a communication from the Prime Minister. He said that Witte had always avoided the subject of foreign politics since he had taken office but that he had suddenly made a new departure. He had told him that in his opinion the friendship and sympathy of England was now of the greatest value to him and to Russia. During the war what Russia had needed was a strong military friend on her border. This need Germany had supplied. But now what Russia needed was not so much the support of a military power as that of a great liberal and commercial power. England's sympathy if afforded in some open and evident form would be of the very greatest service to the party of order. He said that Germany could give a finger's length of help and England an arm's length. France was so deeply implicated in Russia's financial situation that her opinion was discounted. But England was entirely independent of these considerations.

He said that if England could see her way to such an open and evident sign of sympathy he himself could undertake to arrange permanently for the settlement of all difficulties between the two countries in the form of a satisfactory treaty. Accordingly he wished Dillon to proceed at once to London and lay these considerations before you as coming from himself. I asked Dillon if he had any indication as to the form which Witte wished this open and evident sign of sympathy to take? Dillon said that he had once in the course of conversation mentioned a loan. I said that I did not see any other form in which the sympathy of England could be conclusively proved at the present moment, and that he must remember that a loan depended not on the will of our government but on the disposition of the city. I offered of course, if he wished to go, to give him a letter to you; at the same time I said that Hardinge was on his way; that the step was a very important one and that it seemed to me better in the interest of good relations (which Hardinge has at heart) not to take such a step without consulting the person most competent to give assistance. He said in reply that that was his own idea; that he had said so: that Witte had replied "then we shall have to do it through Lamsdorff and nothing will come of it"; that he had a rooted objection to all dealings with diplomatists, with whom he had to speak "diplomatically"; that he much preferred to send a messenger straight from himself who knew his inmost thoughts and could express them as he wished them to be expressed. I pointed out to Dillon that I could neither stop, nor advise, his going but that it would certainly be better, if he wished to have such a proposal carefully considered, to consult the Ambassador about it who in any case would be asked to report fully on the whole matter. He said that personally he did not wish to go and that he thought that Witte would probably insist on his going at once or not going at all. As the Ambassador returns on Friday the delay would not be very considerable.

I thought it best to tell the French Minister about it in general terms. He remarked that it would not in his opinion be a good thing for England and France or for either country alone to make a loan to Russia at the present juncture before the Duma met and before it was certain whether the government was about to renew the old order of things or seriously to inaugurate reforms. It would no doubt be of immense service to Witte, in the present desperate financial situation, if he was able to come before the Duma with a loan in his pocket which would make him independent of the sentiments of the representatives. On the other hand the popular parties would resent such a loan bitterly, which would be tantamount to an open declaration of sympathy and support to their enemies. He added that it

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

would be a very satisfactory arrangement for the German Bankers who had recently advanced money on short-term bonds to have those bonds repaid in good coin at the expense of England and France. He agreed that I had done right to offer no encouragement in Hardinge's absence.

It seems to me that the offer does not in fact amount to very much. We should promise to advance money immediately. (This is taking for granted that we could do so. As however Revelstoke has already signed an agreement with the French and German bankers to issue a loan as soon as the moment is opportune—which apparently it is not yet,—and the Jewish bankers are resolved not to assist Russia at the present moment I don't see what hope we should have of bringing about an advance.) Well suppose we were able to arrange the advance. Russia in reply would then announce her willingness to begin negotiations. But these negotiations would take a long time. And all the evidence is to the effect that at the present moment Russia would not be prepared to make any serious or permanent concessions. The Persian Minister is a fairly good judge and he is strongly of the opinion that Russia regards Persia as her predestined prey and that nothing would induce her to renounce her aims in any permanent form. In that case we should find ourselves confronted with a long and unsatisfactory squabble over details having already given away the one thing we had to give which Russia wanted. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

⁽²⁾ [The omitted paragraphs refer to personal matters and the internal situation.]

No. 206.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/122.

(No. 41.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 10, 1906.

R. January 20, 1906.

I have the honour to report that I was received in private audience to-day at Tsarskoe Selo by their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Russia and that I had the honour of presenting to the Emperor the King's letter announcing my recall.

During the course of a conversation with their Majesties which lasted about half an hour I seized the opportunity of assuring the Emperor in accordance with your instructions, that the attitude of His Majesty's Government at the Morocco Conference would be to fully support France in accordance with the terms of the Anglo-French Agreement.

The Emperor asked me if this was the policy of the Liberal Government and I replied that it was so, and that I had received only yesterday a telegram from you in this sense.

His Majesty remarked that in that case the two Governments would work together since Russia would also loyally support France at the Morocco Conference. I observed to His Majesty that public opinion was very uneasy in France owing to the obscurity surrounding the intentions of the Emperor William and the fear that he might spring a surprise upon Europe.

This feeling, I said, existed also in England though in a minor degree. The Emperor replied that the German Emperor had given several pacific assurances, but that he had received reports from the Russian Ambassador in Paris of the uneasiness prevailing there and he himself did not feel that he quite knew what the German

Emperor would do. He trusted however that the Conference would arrive at a satisfactory conclusion of its labours.

The Emperor spoke with satisfaction of the improvement which had taken place in the relations between England and Russia since the end of the war, and expressed his conviction that they would continue to improve.

Alluding to the internal situation the Emperor said that he hoped that there would now be no more disorders of such a serious nature as that which had occurred recently at Moscow. It could hardly be expected that the series of outrages would cease at once, but serious measures were being taken for the restoration of order which had every appearance of being successful.

Before taking leave of their Majesties the Emperor was graciously pleased to express his regret at my approaching departure from St. Petersburg, but he added that he was consoled by the thought that Russia would gain at the Foreign Office a warm advocate of friendly relations between the two countries. On dismissing me His Majesty handed me a case containing a jewelled snuff-box which he asked me to accept as a personal souvenir from him of my stay in Russia.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 207.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, January 16, 1906.

To continue the curious story of Witte's advances. After Dillon had been told that the best thing Witte could do if he wished to effect an agreement with England was to wait for the Ambassador's return to St. Petersburg, nothing further happened until Hardinge's arrival. I told Dillon when he would come and he called at once. In the course of a long conversation he explained his idea, namely that the King should come here at once and arrange directly with the Emperor for an agreement with England. He argued that the Emperor was the only government in Russia and that nothing else was any real good. He urged that negotiation through Lamsdorff offered no guarantees; that it would lead to long delay and that the result would very likely be that the golden opportunity would be lost. Hardinge said he would call on Witte the next day. You will see his report. I asked Dillon the next day what his impression was as to the visit. Dillon said that Witte was much disappointed and that it was plain to him that he could not manage it "through diplomats." He had opened fire at once with a proposal that the King should come to St. Petersburg at once; Hardinge had talked of the danger to which the King would be thereby exposed. The conversation then drifted off to secondary topics. The attempt had failed. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours very sincerely,

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [The succeeding paragraphs of this long letter refer to the Moroccan Conference and the internal situation in Russia.]

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, January 26, 1906.

I had a long conversation with Count Benckendorff today. . . .⁽²⁾

With regard to relations between England and Russia he spoke at length.

When Lord Lansdowne was in office he had an arrangement with the French Ambassador under which the latter engaged to tell him when the moment was ripe for reopening the question of a general agreement. He was not quite sure whether under present circumstances the same agreement would hold good. I said he might be sure that you were in no sense less willing than Lord Lansdowne either to be on intimate terms with France, or to do all in your power in order to promote good relations with Russia. He was aware, I said, of your point of view which was, that you were anxious for a settlement of all questions at issue when there was a reasonable hope that a satisfactory and permanent solution could be arrived at, and that in the meantime you hoped that no action would be taken to render such a solution more difficult. I asked him what were the views of Count Lamsdorff. He said that Count Lamsdorff had spoken with very great satisfaction of the common action taken by the two governments in Crete and in the Near East. Russia had had difficulties with every country but England, who had acted loyally and cordially with Russia. This had evidently left a great impression on his mind. With regard to the question of a general settlement of outstanding questions he said that Count Lamsdorff was in principle favourable to it. At the same time, he (L[amsdorff]) said, that it was difficult in the general uncertain condition of affairs to negotiate. How could anyone bind Russia to anything in her present situation? At the same time, he said that he would much like to know what England was prepared to offer. In the same sense the Emperor had said to him that after the great disasters of the war and the not too honourable peace by which it had been concluded, a treaty with England, settling all pending questions with her, might be regarded as a sign of weakness unless that treaty contained stipulations which were evidently advantageous to Russia. Count Benckendorff expressed the personal opinion that if England were to agree to a dual arrangement with Russia as to the Dardanelles and Bosphorus (which in his judgement she would be not unwilling to accept) an agreement with England as to other pending questions would be popular in Russia especially if it contained some provision "for publication" which would appear to give Russia the longed-for commercial access to the Persian Gulf. As to a fortified post on the gulf he was convinced that Russia's experience in Port Arthur had effectually cured her of any such desire. His idea was that an agreement containing some such provisions was quite feasible. I asked him what procedure he would recommend in case England were ready to negotiate on this basis. He said that it seemed to him that there existed a strong desire on the part of the Russian Foreign Office to receive a proposal from England which could form a starting point. I observed that before England made renewed proposals she would probably wish to have some sort of assurance that there was a fair chance of a negotiation being successfully carried through. He at once said that under present circumstances no pledge of that nature could be made. Still a beginning must be made by someone. I observed that England had already made proposals which had been in the hands of Russia without effect. To quote one instance. England had submitted a proposal for a general arrangement which had received the Emperor's formal approbation. As a sign of her

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

(2) [The omitted paragraphs refer to the Russian internal situation and the Moroccan Conference.]

good will and to facilitate negotiations England had been asked to withdraw her ships from Port Arthur. This step had immediately been followed by the occupation of Port Arthur by Russia, and there the negotiations had ended. The precedent was not encouraging. He said that the "atmosphere" was now different and that there was no fear of the recurrence of such incidents. What he felt was that a beginning should be made and that England should communicate her terms.

I then asked him (with reference to your remark that even if the moment were not ripe for commencing negotiations, the two governments could abstain from any action likely to prejudice good relations,)—whether it would not be possible to issue instructions to officials in Asia to observe a friendly or at any rate a conciliatory attitude; the special matter which I had in mind being the question of a loan to Persia coupled with political conditions. He said that both you and Lamsdorff had said that their respective governments were averse to making or allowing such a loan, and that he thought that this danger could be easily averted. There was no doubt that if at this moment England granted a loan to Persia with political conditions the effect would be very bad. I said that Lord Salisbury had been in negotiation with the Russian gov[ernmen]t on this very subject when the negotiations were suddenly interrupted by the announcement that Russia had already granted a loan. He said that he was sure such an incident would not be repeated as Count Witte who was responsible for the former loan was very anxious for a good understanding with England. He then spoke of his interview with the Emperor. His Majesty had spoken with regret of the departure of Sir C. Hardinge and had made some observations as to his not having been informed previously to the decision to recall him having been taken. I reminded him of the King's message to the Emperor but he said that this had been received after the transfer of Sir C. Hardinge had become known. "What," said His Majesty "would they think in England if I recalled you without telling them beforehand?" I explained that as the King did not possess the means which were at the disposal of the German Emperor for communicating directly with the Emperor of Russia, a telegram would have to pass through the diplomatic channel and that there were departmental reasons why it was impossible to make such an announcement before it was absolutely settled. Count Benckendorff said that he quite understood, and that he had done his best to explain but the conditions were so different in Russia that it was hard to make the matter clear to his master. The Emperor had then spoken of his hope soon to see the King in Russia. He had explained to the Emperor that there were difficulties as to a land journey under present circumstances and also that in the present state of affairs a visit to the Capital was out of the question. The Emperor objected that at any rate a visit to Tsarskoe would be perfectly feasible and would be a source of great pleasure.⁽³⁾ Count Benckendorff had replied that such a visit could hardly bear the character of an official visit to the Emperor of Russia by the King of England. He added to me that it was evident that the Emperor was anxious for the visit and that it would have an immense political importance. He threw out the suggestion that negotiations or pourparlers could be begun in secret and that an entente, carefully framed in outline beforehand could be "clinched" during personal conversations between the Sovereigns. I said that as Sir C. Hardinge was now at the Foreign Office there was an admirable opportunity for conducting negotiations through a channel with which the Emperor was familiar and which was personally acceptable to His Majesty, and that Sir Arthur Nicolson the new Ambassador here was at present acting in cooperation with the Emperor's representative which was a good augury for future good feeling. He agreed. The whole conversation was perfectly informal and I repeat it at length not because it was in any sense an official communication but because it may give a clue to the state of feeling here. In conclusion I may repeat that there was no sign whatever of any wish of the Russian Government to give any

(³) [*cp.* Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 564-5. The proposal is there mentioned in a letter of Mr. Spring-Rice to Lord Knollys of January 31, 1906.]

indication of what it was prepared to give in exchange for the favours suggested. Nothing could exceed the friendliness shown by Count Benckendorff to England. His sincere desire to see a better understanding between the countries was most evident.

Yours sincerely,

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

No. 209.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 173/123.

(No. 119.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. February 12, 1906.

Sir,

R. February 19, 1906.

I have the honour to report that Count Lamsdorff has been lately the object of violent abuse in the press chiefly in connection with the Serbo-Austrian conflict.⁽¹⁾ Rumours of his resignation are again circulated. These rumours are not of recent date (see Sir Charles Hardinge's telegram of August 16⁽²⁾) but are very persistent. A short time ago similar rumours were circulated in connection with the name of Count Benckendorff.

From several sources, which ought to be well informed I gather that, as a matter of fact, Count Lamsdorff stands very well with the Emperor, and with his own department. He has however apprehensions in connection with the meeting of the Duma. If it meets it will most probably order an enquiry into the cause of the war and Count Lamsdorff (although his defence is easy) cannot defend himself without inculcating the Emperor. That he will never consent to do and would prefer to take the blame and resign.

As to the causes of the attacks on him in the press they are attributed (so far as they are organized, as is believed from abroad) to his attitude towards the Austro-Russian agreement and the Anglo-French *entente*. In the former case it is no doubt largely owing to the personal characteristics of himself and the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople that the agreement of 1897 has worked without a hitch, and I understand from the Austrian Ambassador that the German Government has expressed much annoyance at the manner in which Austria has acted independently of her German ally in the Balkan Peninsula: the especial cause of complaint being that she in concert with Russia and the western powers has consistently taken the side of reform against the Sultan.

With regard to the second case. Count Lamsdorff as soon as the Anglo-French convention was published in 1903 [*sic*] repaired to Paris with an autograph letter of the Emperor's approving of the *entente*. He even obtained leave (which is rare in this country) for the publication of the Imperial message in its exact wording, although without the signature. It was believed, that had it not been for the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war Count Lamsdorff would have negotiated an agreement between England and Russia.

On the publication of the Anglo-Japanese treaty of last year, Count Witte, after his interview with the Kaiser, strongly urged a coalition between France, America, Russia and Germany⁽³⁾ as a counterpoise to England and Japan. Count Lamsdorff was instructed to make overtures to France in this sense. On the refusal of France to join,⁽⁴⁾ and the repudiation by the President of the United States of the intentions attributed to him, the proposal was dropped, mainly on account of Count Lamsdorff's own objections to enter into an Agreement with Germany alone.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp. 148-67.*]

⁽²⁾ [This is an error for August 17. Telegram No. 146 of August 17 reported the rumour of Count Lamsdorff's resignation and of his proposed succession by M. Isvolski.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra, p. 205, No. 195, and p. 217, No. 203.*]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra, p. 214, No. 201.*]

Count Lamsdorff was held to have been partly to blame for the failure of the proposed coalition and as reported by Sir Charles Hardinge at the time, his removal formed an important item in the German programme.

As a reply to these attempts Count Lamsdorff received a high decoration from his Sovereign and he has since, I understand, maintained his position. Count Witte himself abandoned the idea of an anti-English coalition and has since become the advocate of an *entente* with England.

The only course which remained open to Germany was to formally abandon her designs on Chinese territory, withdraw her troops and assume towards China that rôle of *Amicus Curia* which she adopts towards Mahommedan governments.

These negotiations were described in detail in Sir Charles Hardinge's Despatches Nos. 586, 594, 604 and 623⁽⁵⁾ of last year. They appear to be known to the Austrian Ambassador who spoke to me about them recently. He added that an important part of the scheme was a reconciliation between Germany and France, on the subject of Morocco, through Russia's mediation, which Count Witte undertook to effect.

With the refusal of France to join a coalition against England this proposal fell through with the rest of the design. To this fact may perhaps be attributed the present refusal of the Emperor of Russia to make an appeal to the German Emperor on the subject of Morocco as demanded by France and if Baron d'Aerenthal's [*sic*] statements be correct the whole incident has a good deal to do with the bitterness of the German Government against France and also against Count Lamsdorff, especially if it was the case, as was believed by Sir Charles Hardinge, that he succeeded in persuading the Emperor that unless France joined the coalition, it would be unwise for Russia to accept the German proposals.

Monsieur Bompard in speaking to me about Count Lamsdorff's position, said that the press campaign that was being organized against him, much resembled that conducted with so much success against Monsieur Delcassé. The recent fall of an Italian Foreign Minister of whom Germany disapproved, and the appointment of a statesman in his place whose German leanings were notorious, was another striking example of the influences which could be and were being exercised by Germany in the internal politics of foreign nations, and which constituted in his opinion, a serious danger to the tranquillity of Europe.

Count Benckendorff told me in strict confidence that it was not in Count Lamsdorff's interest that His Majesty's Government should make any public statement in his favour or should appear to take any special interest in his retention of his office. I venture to suggest that his nervousness with regard to the resumption of negotiations with England is partly due to the consciousness that if he pressed the matter forward, especially before public opinion was ripe for it, the attacks upon him both at Court and in the press would only increase in virulence.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

MINUTES.

This is an interesting and accurate account of Count Lamsdorff's position during the past six months. It is satisfactory to hear that he still stands well with the Emperor but I gathered before I left Russia that he would not remain in office after the meeting of the Duma. He holds that having for many years been responsible solely to the Emperor he cannot now submit to any interference by the Duma with the Department for Foreign Affairs. He is a strong advocate of autocratic Government. He passed through many difficult moments during the war and I think that this country is indebted to him for his moderating counsels. He was entirely opposed to the proposed coalition against England after the publication of the Japanese Treaty last October, and he did not disguise his satisfaction when the French Ambassador spontaneously rejected the proposals which by the Emperor's orders and at Count Witte's instigation he was compelled to make.

C. H.

There is much matter for reflection in this.

E. G.

(5) [*v. supra*, pp. 202-3, No. 193, pp. 205-7, No. 195, pp. 208-10, No. 197, and pp. 214-5, No. 201.]

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, March 1, 1906.

.⁽²⁾ Benckendorff will soon be back in London. He will I suppose talk about the entente which he hopes to arrange. He sees no difficulty about Paris. The arrangement made between Austria and Russia in 1897 and which has been loyally carried out by Count Lamsdorff with (on the whole) good results shows that it is quite possible to arrive at a working arrangement with Russia for common action. The object of the agreement was to maintain the political *status quo* at the same time to act in common with the object of securing for the populations some tolerable conditions of existence. It has not done much but it has kept the peace in the Balkans and has prevented the two nations from quarrelling continually as they did before the arrangement. It is very unfavourably regarded by Germany who thinks that Austria is inclined to separate herself from German policy in Turkey. It works very well, as I hear from the Austrian Ambassador here. It is always the subject of attack on the part of the Jingo newspapers but the Emperor has kept loyally to it. With regard to other considerations I learn from both Benckendorff and Hartwig (head of the Asiatic Department who is now going as Minister to Persia) that Russia desires to obtain our assent to that interpretation of the Black Sea clause which was advocated by Lord Salisbury at Berlin, namely that the clause represents only an *engagement to respect the independent determinations* of the Sultan conformably with existing treaties. Shouvalow answered that Russia regarded the clause *as part of the law of nations* and therefore *as independent of the decisions of the Sultan*. The practical effect of our modifying the view taken by us during the Japanese war (that is, the view of Count Shouvalow) would be that if the Sultan gave his permission for ships to pass the straits we should have no objection. The French will no doubt be informed of any negotiations which may take place in the matter and if so we might excite their apprehension by not telling them. It is curious that both the Ambassador and Hartwig should have used practically the same language and it looks as if a formal proposal in this sense would be made.

I can see that your frank communications about Morocco and also about the Persian loan have had a very good effect here and nothing could exceed the friendliness of the Foreign Office.

Our relations will very much improve as soon as the Duma is a working institution. The reactionary party who have had the command of the press for years have done all in their power to stir up popular feeling against us. Now the public is provided with numbers of pamphlets very well written for popular consumption which point out the greatness of England and how it is all due to her free institutions. If this view prevails we shall soon have more friendly relations between the two peoples. I fear that the Government will do its best to influence the elections by the exercise of undue pressure and that its present policy is one of repression of a very determined and cruel character. But there are indications that the Emperor is averse to this policy and that he will do something to stop it. But he has no initiative and no courage of the active character. It is possible to make him understand but difficult to make him act. He would like to work with the moderate men of the Zemstvos but is afraid that they will know nothing of business and that they will be unable to manage the administrative machine. So he folds his hands, tells them they make very nice speeches, and does nothing.

Witte is not a friend of reaction although he is quite willing to go in for it or at any rate to allow his government to carry on such a policy. He prefers to intrigue with the extremists of both parties and his predominant feeling seems to be in

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter deals with the Moroccan question.]

jealousy of anyone respectable, moderate or clever enough to take his place. A reactionary government would suit him well enough for it would not last long and he could overthrow it. A moderate and sensible government with a moderate man at its head would be fatal to his chances. The general feeling is that he thinks only of himself. But then he may be right. At present no one has appeared with strength enough to take his position.

Yours sincerely,
C. SPRING-RICE.

Bompard said very explicitly that the language held by the Emperor to him showed quite clearly that he was *not* under the Kaiser's influence at all—or at least not at the moment of talking.

No. 211.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, March 15, 1906.

. . . .⁽²⁾ I hear you saw Dillon. He gave your message to Witte who was much pleased. He also saw Lord Knollys who called in Esher who listened attentively to Dillon's message. They both said there was too much danger in a journey to advise the King to undertake it. Benckendorff saw the Emperor twice. He was very friendly in his expressions about England and seemed very much gratified at the way in which we were acting together in different parts of the world. But he said that he would like to see the King.⁽³⁾ B[enckendorff] wished that his name should not be mentioned. The reason is that the Emperor would not like to have it said that he had asked the King and that he had refused. The moment is opportune if it can be managed. It is like visiting a man just declared bankrupt. I remember in Japan there was the custom if you heard that a man's house was in danger from fire to call on him at the last moment before the fire took hold. Witte's idea is that a visit now or in the early summer would have a much greater effect than if it was put off till all danger had passed, or until there was no court to visit.

The German press is persistently saying that the Kaiser is to meet the King in the spring and that the King wishes it, and this makes it much more marked if the King does not come. The Emperor thinks that Peterhof would suit as the King could come by sea. This would be like the Emperor's own visit to Balmoral. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Yours sincerely,
CECIL SPRING-RICE.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [The opening paragraph refers to the Moroccan Conference.]

⁽³⁾ [The project seems to have dropped after a memorandum written by the King on March 22, v. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 565.]

⁽⁴⁾ [The rest of this letter touches on the Cretan question and Persian affairs.]

No. 212.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 173/124.

(No. 129.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 19, 1906.

Count Benckendorff read to me to-day some extracts from a message which Count Lamsdorff had desired him to communicate. This was to the effect that the Russian Government had noticed with much satisfaction how, without any anterior agreement, England had gradually shown a tendency to co-operate with Russia. He instanced

our co-operation in Crete and in Macedonian Reforms, where he had observed that, even when Lord Lansdowne had wished to make a proposal which was not entirely in accord with Russian views, it had been done in such a way as to make the Russian Government feel that co-operation with them was desired. He further instanced the Algeiras Conference as evidence of our working together.

I said that I was very glad to receive such a message, and from some things in Count Lamsdorff's message I gathered that the Russian Government might perhaps wish to go further and to have something in the nature of an *entente*, such as we had with France.

Count Benckendorff seemed to think that, owing to the unsettled condition of affairs in Russia, it was somewhat difficult for the Russian Government to come to us with offers which might be used against them in Russia at the present time.

I said that every arrangement of this kind must have two sides, and of course what we should expect would be that repose should be guaranteed on our Indian frontier. I thought we could guarantee that on our side there would be repose, in the sense of not pushing forward into Asia, but we should want to be sure that if we maintained this attitude there would be no changes in the Russian frontier which would operate to our disadvantage or disturb the prospects of peace. In Europe we had, as Count Lamsdorff had observed, found no difficulty in co-operation. In Asia it would perhaps be easier for us to arrange for co-operation now than it had been a few years ago. At any rate, I said, we had done our best to keep the door open for agreement, for we had lately been very much pressed to lend money to the Persian Government, which we had declined to do, because we could not lend it without making conditions which would alter the situation in Persia.

Count Benckendorff was aware of this, but the only observation he made was that he did not think Russia would have much difficulty in securing the condition we desired on the Indian frontier, and he said nothing as to what requests Russia might have to make on her side with regard to that or any other question. He evidently regarded the matter as one for further consideration as to how far the good relations between Russia and ourselves, which are at present entirely indefinite, could take some more definite form.

He asked me what news I had from Algeiras. I said that everything now depended upon whether Germany would give up the idea of having police of a third power at Casa Blanca, and if so what she would ask in return. If she gave up Casa Blanca but asked concessions which the French could not accept it would of course not advance matters. But I saw some reason to hope that Germany really desired a settlement, and if so I hoped the Conference might end in an Agreement.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

No. 213.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Spring-Rice,

Foreign Office, March 26, 1906.

Count Benckendorff has given us copies of a number of documents relating to a supposed secret agreement by which England and Japan guarantee the territorial integrity of the possessions of the Sultan of Turkey in Asia Minor, and bind themselves to help the Imperial Ottoman Government by their united forces against any attack upon the Ottoman Empire on the Asiatic side.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 213-4, No. 200.]

The most circumstantial of these documents is a supposed telegram from Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador in London, to the first Secretary of the Sultan, dated January 29th, 1906, in which Musurus states that I have just communicated to him the definitive text of the secret article to the above effect.

No such article exists, there is no secret article or understanding of any kind between us and Japan; the published alliance contains everything that has been agreed upon between us. The supposed guarantee of Turkey has never been mentioned between us and Japan, nor have we ever mentioned such a proposal to Musurus or at Constantinople, and we have undertaken no new engagement of any kind with regard to the Turkish Empire. If it is possible to make a denial more categorical than this I am quite ready to do it.

What does interest me is the circumstantial character of the documents that have been supplied to the Russian Government. It has taken some trouble to invent them and there must have been a strong motive for doing this and conveying them to the Russian Government. But Count Lamsdorff is probably as well, or better, able than I am to guess their origin and motive.

You may give a copy of this letter to Count Lamsdorff.

[Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 213.

*Télégramme de Musurus Pasha au Premier Secrétaire du Sultan en date du
29 Janvier, 1906.*

Private.⁽³⁾

Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères d'Angleterre vient de me communiquer le texte définitif de l'article secret additionnel au traité d'alliance Anglo-Japonais qui a été établi par lui de concert avec l'Ambassadeur du Japon. Je vous transmet la traduction turque de cet article :—

“Les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne et du Japon pour compléter les stipulations du traité conclu entre elles le 12 Août 1905 sont tombés d'accord sur l'article suivant qu'ils prennent l'obligation de tenir strictement secret. Les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne et du Japon déclarent qu'ils garantissent l'intégrité territoriale des possessions de Sa Majesté le Sultan en Asie Mineure et seront tenus de porter secours au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman par leur forces réunies contre toute attaque dont l'Empire Ottoman serait l'objet du côté de l'Asie. Cet article additionnel et secret aura la même force et valeur que s'il était mot par mot inséré dans le texte du traité susmentionné du 12 Août 1905 et restera en vigueur pour la même durée.”

Les textes Français et Anglais de l'article précité ont été expédiés par l'Ambassadeur Turc à Londres par poste.

MINUTES.

There is a mystery about this affair: I do not believe that Musurus invented this telegram; but someone has invented it and given it to the Russians. This is the sort of thing that has gone on for years; now for the first time the Russians are giving us the opportunity of exposing the lies.

E. G.

This last fact is worth all the lies put together.

H. C-B.

⁽³⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 83.]

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, April 3, 1906.

Witte said the other day that he was in favour of an understanding with England but that there was no hope of a satisfactory arrangement unless the Emperor took the matter up and he did not believe that he would unless the King said he would come and visit him at Peterhof. He is of course desirous of getting a loan before the Duma meets and wants the help of England. Perhaps Russia would formulate some terms or other if she had hopes of getting money from us. But unfortunately she seems to think that the favours must be all on our side. On the whole I don't think that it would be possible for Lamsdorff whose position is very weak to make any proposal or to give any definite answer to a proposal of ours unless he had orders from his master which is not likely at present. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

C. SPRING RICE.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [The last paragraph of this letter describes the internal situation in Russia.]

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, April 10, 1906.

I asked to see Count Lamsdorff yesterday and called by appointment. He said he was just on the point of writing to me as he had heard from Count Benckendorff that I had an important communication to make.

I gave him copy of your private letter of March 26.⁽²⁾ which I enclosed in a letter to him giving the substance in French (he does not understand English) and adding—as I thought I was justified in doing—a warm acknowledgement of the “perfect frankness” displayed by him in communicating the documents.

He read the letter attentively and said that he was very glad to receive it: he would show it to the Emperor at once and it would have, he was sure, an excellent effect. He was convinced by experience that the wisest policy in diplomatic dealings was a policy of frankness. The incident reminded him of the famous “Copenhagen letters,” the forged correspondence respecting Bulgaria, which had been communicated to the Emperor Alexander and by him shown to Bismarck who was thereby enabled to refute the calumny. He gave me no indication of the source or origin of the present forgeries; their object was however evident. He added, with earnestness, that the present moment would probably be fruitful in such attempts to sow distrust between England and Russia, as the fact that Germany had refused a loan to Russia while England and France were making one, would give rise to the supposition that an alliance was brewing between the three. The weapon to use against such

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 228–9, No. 213.]

machinations was the one which had been so effective in the present instance—namely the frank interchange of ideas and the immediate communication of any “incriminating” documents. . . . ⁽³⁾

Yours sincerely,
CECIL SPRING RICE.

⁽³⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to the position of the Dalai Lama and closes with a further reference to the forgeries.]

[ED. NOTE.—On March 28, Sir E. Grey wrote a private letter to Lord Knollys with reference to the desirability of a visit by King Edward to the Emperor Nicholas II. The letter closes with the following statement: “All therefore that I want to do for the moment is to point out what is to be desired as an object of foreign policy and how entirely it will in the long run depend upon the King: but for the present it is impossible to come to any decision and we must wait upon events.” Grey MSS., Vol. 64.]

No. 216.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 237.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 23, 1906.

Count Benckendorff told me to-day that the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg had, by order of his Government, made enquiry regarding the reports in the Press as to an *Entente* between Russia and England on the subject of their reciprocal interests in Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Thibet, and had declared that the German Government would be very glad of any arrangement of this kind which did not damage German interests. He had said, however, that the German Government hoped that Russia would not put Germany, in this matter, in the presence of a *fait accompli*, and added that the question of the Bagdad Railway directly affected the interests of Germany, and that the attitude of the Russian Government on this question had, in the eyes of Germany, a special importance. M. Isvolsky had replied, by order of the Emperor, that the Russian Government knew how to appreciate the frankness of the step which the German Government had taken. The tendencies towards an arrangement between England and Russia for Asiatic affairs had not yet taken any concrete form, and had not had hitherto any other result than to maintain the *status quo* in these affairs. But a concrete *Entente* between England and Russia might become the natural result of the situation, and consequently the Russians took act with satisfaction of the declaration which the German Government had made to them in view of this eventuality. M. Isvolsky had also said that they recognised the German interests in the question of the Bagdad Railway, and that they would not take any decision in connection with it without previous friendly explanations with the German Government.⁽¹⁾

I said that M. Isvolsky had described the situation and the feeling between Russia and England in terms with which I entirely agreed; that I was to be asked a question in Parliament with regard to the reported Agreement between Russia and England; that I must reply that such an Agreement does not exist as reported in the Press; but that I would adjust my answer to make it agree with the language used

⁽¹⁾ [A memorandum in French describing M. Isvolski's conversation with Herr von Schoen is attached to the draft of this despatch. The memorandum appears to come through Count Benckendorff from M. Isvolski, though it is unsigned. It is exactly identical in substance with the first paragraph of this despatch.]

by M. Isvolsky. I also said that nothing was further from our desire than to use friendship with Russia as a lever to create difficulties with Germany, either for Russia or for ourselves. As in the case of our *entente* with France, we would regard it as not directed in any hostile sense against any other Power.

I told Count Benckendorff that Germany had not yet approached us about the Bagdad Railway, but they might do so at any time, and it was, therefore, important that the Russian Government should come to a decision about it. We had not settled on what precise terms we might be willing to co-operate, if asked to do so, and we could not settle this till we knew the conditions on which Russia might be willing to come into the enterprise.

I reminded Count Benckendorff that, though I had not put forward any general proposals for an *entente*, yet the Bagdad Railway and present events in Persia, on which I had proposed co-operation, were two very important subjects which might carry us some way towards a general Agreement.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

No. 217.

Question asked in the House of Commons, May 24, 1906.

(*Parl. Deb.*, 4th ser., vol. 157, p. 1416.)

Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any statement as to the alleged agreement arrived at between His Majesty's Government and Russia.

Sir Edward Grey: I cannot make any statement about the alleged agreement as described in the Press, because such an agreement does not exist. But I may add that there has been an increasing tendency for England and Russia to deal in a friendly way with questions concerning them both as they arise. This has on more than one occasion lately led the two Governments to find themselves in co-operation. It is a tendency which we shall be very glad to encourage and which, if it continues, will naturally result in the progressive settlement of questions in which each country has an interest, and in strengthening friendly relations between them.

IV.—THE PERIOD OF THE MAKING OF THE CONVENTION, 1906-7.

No. 218.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 329.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 24, 1906.

R. May 28, 1906.

I have the honour to state that Monsieur Izvolsky told me yesterday that the news as regarded the Shah's health was better. There therefore appeared to be no present reason to take serious steps. He said that he had no doubt Mr. Grant Duff had already received instructions to act jointly with his Russian colleague in support of the Vali Ahd's succession to the throne. He had himself sent corresponding instructions to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran. I observed that it might be advisable that the two Legations should have a certain sum at their disposal in

order to conciliate the troops and induce them to maintain their allegiance to the Vali Ahd on the death of the Shah. On the occasion of the present Shah's accession the question of a largesse to the troops had proved a serious one and it was as well that the two Governments should be prepared to take steps if necessary. He agreed in principle and said that Monsieur Hartwig, who left yesterday for his post, had spoken to him on the subject. Had I any instructions in regard to the matter? I mentioned the conversation which you had with the Russian Ambassador on the 11th instant in which you had spoken as to the possibility of a joint loan. He said that he had received a report of this conversation and that he was quite agreed, in principle, with the opinions you had expressed. At the same time the information at his disposal was not sufficiently definite to warrant a decision. He had the whole subject under his consideration and would inform you later when he had been able to master the subject.

He then proceeded to say that the German Ambassador had called upon him to make a communication on the subject of the information published in the Standard as to a supposed Anglo-Russian *entente*.⁽¹⁾ Herr von Schoen had said that so far as such an understanding made for the peace of world Germany could only hail it with satisfaction. With regard to one point only he had an observation to make. This was, that part of the published basis of the agreement which concerned the Bagdad Railway. This was the subject of a concession granted by the Sultan to the Deutsche Bank and was therefore specifically a German interests [*sic*], as to which Germany had every right to be consulted. Monsieur Izvolsky had, he said, immediately telegraphed the substance of this conversation to London in order that it might be, *en toute franchise* communicated to you.⁽²⁾ He regarded the communication as satisfactory as it showed that Germany had, as a matter of fact, no objection to an *entente* between England and Russia. With regard to the Bagdad Railway he considered that the contention of Germany was just, and that German claims ought to be considered. I said that you had never left any room for doubt in all your communications on the subject or in the communications made through Sir Charles Hardinge, that in seeking an agreement with Russia His Majesty's Government was aiming at an agreement which made for peace and not an agreement to be directed against the interests of any third Power. With regard to the Bagdad Railway the question was whether or no Great Britain should participate, in common with France, in the enterprise inaugurated by Germany. We had hitherto refused the German offer to participate mainly because we were not willing, as long as Russia was opposed to the project, to enter into a combination which Russia might regard as an unfriendly act. Should Russia withdraw her objections, we should, in common with France, be more willing to give a favourable answer to the German proposals for financial participation, if in other respects they appeared satisfactory. There was no question of acting in the matter without considering Germany, which indeed, as the concession was a German one, was impossible.

Monsieur Izvolsky said that at first sight he thought that the views expressed by you to Count Benckendorff were such as he could recommend to the Emperor; but he was unable to give a definite answer until the competent authorities had been consulted.

I subsequently spoke to the French Ambassador on the subject. His Excellency said that he had not mentioned the matter of the Anglo-Russian negotiations to Monsieur Izvolsky as he thought that it would be wiser to wait until he was more sure of his ground. Monsieur Izvolsky had not spoken to him of the communication made by the German Ambassador. On the subject of the Bagdad Railway he had

(1) [May 19, 1906. The article refers to reports of an Anglo-Russian Agreement in the Berlin press, and, while regarding these as in "anticipation of facts," sketches the probable lines of the expected Anglo-Russian Convention. The foreign papers, which reproduced the article, gave it a more definite form than it bears in the original.]

(2) [*cp. supra*, pp. 231-2, No. 216.]

spoken to Monsieur Izvolsky, Count Witte and the director of the General Staff. The former had given a favourable answer in principle but had reserved a definite reply until he should have consulted the competent authorities. Count Witte had informed him, that on reconsideration, he had changed his mind with regard to the matter and was now prepared to recommend Russia to withdraw her opposition. The same answer had been received from the military authorities who no longer appeared to consider that the construction of the line was injurious to Russia's military interests. Monsieur Bompard said that the director of the Deutsche Bank at Constantinople had approached Sir Nicholas O'Connor with regard to the participation of English capital and that he had subsequently proceeded to Paris where he had made a similar proposal with regard to French participation to the directors of the Ottoman Bank. It was noticeable however that the offers had been solely made with regard to financial participation and the inducements put forward were solely those incident on the issue of a loan in Paris. Nothing had been said either of the industrial advantages incident on construction, or on political or commercial control, or participation in control.

With regard to the general question Monsieur Bompard made the following remarks. The denial of the intention to offer a loan to Persia, if made by Germany, would correspond exactly to Count Tattenbach's similar denial of the intention to make an advance to Morocco,—a denial which did not as a matter of fact prevent Germany making an arrangement which was hardly distinguishable from a loan. The steps taken by the Director of the Deutsche Bank pointed to the desire of Germany to obtain French capital but they also pointed to the desire of Germany to restrict French co-operation to one of a purely financial nature. The Government however could not and would not participate without giving due consideration to the general commercial and political aspects of the question.

With regard to the question of the observations made by Herr v[on] Schoen as to a *rapprochement* between England and Russia, similar friendly observations had been made as to the *rapprochements* made between Italy and France, between Austria and Russia and between France and England. But it was not to be denied that in all these cases Germany had been untiring in her efforts to destroy the force of all these agreements, while protesting publicly that she regarded them with favour. Monsieur Bompard therefore considered that while accepting with satisfaction the friendly sentiments of Germany the two Governments should not lose sight of the fact that the advice and assistance of Germany would not always and invariably be given with a view to the furtherance of harmony. The two Governments should act for themselves according to their own interests. They should of course make it plain that their efforts to come to a mutual agreement did not and could not entail any consequences injurious to any power which sincerely desired peace. But they should act not through intermediaries, but directly, unless they were anxious to pay somewhat heavy brokerage.

He pointed out further that as regards the Bagdad railway it was not advisable that the three Powers (France England and Russia) should act separately, by separate and independent negotiations, with Germany. They should act as a unit and if they did so the terms obtained would be better. For this purpose it was most necessary that they should come to a common understanding as soon as possible. This he said, not with any hostile feeling towards Germany, but from the purely business point of view.

He added that although as he had told me, he had not thought it advisable as yet to speak on the subject of Anglo-Russian relations, which he had abstained from doing because he was not yet sufficiently clear as to the policy which would be pursued by the new Government and because, in principle, he thought it was better that Russia and England should fight out their battle by themselves, on the ground of their own private interests and without foreign interference,—yet His Majesty's Embassy might rest assured that they might count on the friendly and willing co-operation of their French Colleagues in case any question of friction should

arise which could be usefully *aplani* by the offices of a mutual friend. I said I was sure that in the future as in the past his friendly offices would be appealed to if the occasion arose.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING RICE.

MINUTE.

I think Mr. Grant Duff already has instructions to support the Valiahd in concert with his Russian colleague at Teheran.

E. G.

No. 219.

Sir A. Johnstone to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 64.) Secret.

Sir,

Copenhagen, D. May 27, 1906.

R. June 5, 1906.

Monsieur Crozier, the French Minister here, who has been on leave in Paris during more than two months, returned last week, and yesterday I had the opportunity of a long and confidential conversation with him.

We discussed the nomination of Monsieur Isvolsky as Russian Foreign Minister, and Monsieur Crozier's remarks in this connection may prove of interest as he was very intimate with Monsieur Isvolsky whom he invited, when the Russian Minister was in Paris last March, to meet Monsieur Bourgeois at luncheon.

During the Russo-Japanese war moreover, and during the time when Monsieur Isvolsky was feeling very keenly the Russian defeats, it was to Monsieur Crozier that he turned for sympathy, and the remarks he then made on European politics, may furnish an index to the line he may be expected to pursue, now that he is in charge of the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg.

Believing, as I do, that Monsieur Isvolsky is no very ardent partisan of the Russo-French alliance, I sounded Monsieur Crozier as to his views on this subject, and I ascertained that, whilst he was of opinion that Monsieur Isvolsky would find it necessary from financial and political reasons to adhere to the dual arrangement, he was distrustful of His Excellency's sympathy with, and leanings towards Germany.

Monsieur Crozier alluded especially to Monsieur Isvolsky's friendship with Herr von Schoen, lately promoted from here to the Embassy at St. Petersburg, and said that he feared the German Ambassador would personally be at a great advantage with his other colleagues from his previous intimacy with the Minister. Monsieur Crozier added that Monsieur Isvolsky during the winter and spring of 1905, had frequently alluded to the friendly attitude of Germany and the gratitude he felt for it, and Monsieur Crozier had several times reminded him that the Russian Government owed a still deeper debt of gratitude to the French than they did to the German Government.

It was fairly evident to me from this portion of the conversation that Monsieur Isvolsky had held the scales pretty evenly balanced between his French and German colleagues, both of whom have possibly informed their Governments of the friendship felt by His Excellency to their respective countries.

Monsieur Crozier in the course of further conversation told me that Monsieur Isvolsky was no friend of the Mürsteg programme, as he was an opponent of the extension, at present at any rate, of Russian influence in the far East, and considered that her energies ought to be turned towards Constantinople. Monsieur Isvolsky, so said Monsieur Crozier, had been most desirous of being named Ambassador to Turkey whenever the post was vacant, and His Excellency had frequently stated to Monsieur Crozier that his country had made a mistake in allowing Austria-Hungary to obtain a position equal to that of Russia in the Balkans. I was serving in Vienna when Count Kapnist died there, and I then heard from a good source that the Austrian-Hungarian

Government had signified to the Russian Government privately their disinclination to receive Monsieur Isvolsky as Ambassador, and it appears to me quite possible that whenever Russia is sufficiently freed from her interior political troubles, to take an active interest in foreign policy, the Austro-Russian Agreement as to joint action in the Balkans, may not receive as much support from Monsieur Isvolsky as it did from Count Lamsdorff.

Monsieur Crozier summed up his impression of Monsieur Isvolsky as follows: "He is very Russian, an ardent patriot, very supple and extremely active ('remuant')." He added that Monsieur Isvolsky had often spoken to him in admiring terms of Great Britain and her institutions.

I have sent by Messenger a copy of the above to Sir A. Nicolson under flying seal through Berlin.

I have, &c.

ALAN JOHNSTONE.

No. 220.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. 371/177.

(No. 82.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 28, 1906.

I took an opportunity to-day of explaining to the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires that there was no truth in the statement which had appeared in the Press that we had concluded an Agreement with the Russian Government.⁽¹⁾ What had happened was that we had lately had occasion to discuss several matters with Russia, and had been co-operating with regard to them. I instanced especially Crete, Macedonia, the increase of Customs Duties in Turkey, and the general state of affairs in Persia, with special reference to the trouble on the Turco-Persian frontier. Many years ago, Russia and England had surveyed this frontier and drawn up a map stating approximately what the frontier was then considered to be, and now that there was a dispute about it and encroachments by Turkey we had naturally taken a joint interest in the matter.

Count Mutsu asked me whether we had not also discussed Afghanistan and Thibet with Russia.

I said that since I came into Office we had not had occasion to discuss the position of Afghanistan with Russia at all. But I had explained to the Russian Government the provisions of the Adhesion Convention with China with regard to Thibet.

Count Mutsu asked me whether we had also explained this Adhesion Convention at Tokio.

I said we had not made any communication to Tokio or any other place on this point. With regard to the information given to Russia, I said Lord Lansdowne had given a definite statement to Russia of our position respecting Thibet, as it had been left by the Convention between India and Thibet. Statements had lately appeared in the Press to the effect that our Convention with China would give us a new and privileged position in Thibet. The Russian Government had made enquiries, and I had explained that the Convention with China was purely an adhesion Convention, and had not altered the position as described to Russia by Lord Lansdowne.

Count Mutsu said that he understood, then, that we had not concluded any Agreement with Russia, but might perhaps be on our way towards one.

I said we had certainly not concluded any Agreement. But we were undoubtedly on more friendly terms than we had been a few years ago. I assured him, however,

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 233, No. 218, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

that as soon as there was any question on our part of coming to an Agreement with Russia that affected matters within the scope of our Alliance with Japan I would take care to keep the Japanese Government informed.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

No. 221.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 333.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 29, 1906.

R. June 11, 1906.

I called on Monsieur Isvolsky this afternoon, and after a few preliminary remarks I informed him that I would be in a position to converse with him in regard to certain questions in which both countries were interested. In fact I could tell him that I had received your instructions to exchange views on several important matters, such as Thibet and others, and I understood that the Russian Government were desirous of entering upon a discussion which might lead to a satisfactory conclusion. Monsieur Isvolsky expressed his great satisfaction with this communication, and he assured me that he would cordially take part in the discussions to which I alluded. He added that he could do so with the more satisfaction as a communication which he had recently received from the German Ambassador had set his mind at rest in regard to any possible difficulties from Germany, and that he now felt that he could converse with me with greater liberty than would otherwise perhaps have been the case. The only question on which Germany had expressed some anxiety was that of the Bagdad Railway, but in respect to a general understanding between Great Britain and Russia the German Ambassador stated that his Government regarded it with favourable eyes.

I remarked that I quite understood that the Bagdad Railway was of special interest to Germany, but it seemed to me that it was one to be treated separately from those which I desired to discuss with him. I was of opinion that our conversations should be treated as strictly confidential, especially as they were related to questions affecting the interests of Great Britain and Russia alone, and that I was anxious to discuss them in a spirit of perfect confidence and frankness and solely between ourselves. It seemed to me essential to observe these conditions in order to avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

Monsieur Isvolsky expressed his entire agreement with my views, and observed that the Bagdad Railway and the question also of a Persian Loan had been mentioned by you to Count Benckendorff and he, therefore, thought that they would form part of our conversations.

I replied that of course they were questions of importance and even of urgency, but to my mind distinct from the main questions with which I trusted we should shortly deal. I would naturally be always ready to speak on them also, and indeed would very probably have frequent occasions to do so. I added that I would prefer to wait a few days before commencing our conversations, and that perhaps we might initiate them with an exchange of views in regard to Thibet.

I had been prepared by my French colleague to find Monsieur Isvolsky jubilant in regard to the benevolent views of the German Government relative to an Anglo-Russian understanding, and inclined to take the German Ambassador into our confidence more fully than perhaps would be desirable: and it seemed, therefore, necessary to impress on His Excellency that, while admitting the right of the German Government to be interested in all that affected a German Railway enterprise, it would

be desirable in the interests of a smooth course of our forthcoming discussions that the treatment of the questions before the two countries should be a strictly confidential matter between our respective Governments.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Sir A. Nicolson's language was approved by Sir E. Grey in a despatch to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 274 of June 16, 1906.]

No. 222.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 345.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 5, 1906.

R. June 11, 1906.

During the audience which I had the honour to have with His Majesty the Emperor yesterday I took the opportunity of informing His Majesty that I trusted shortly to open conversations with his Minister for Foreign Affairs on certain questions which were of importance and interest to both countries. The Emperor said that he had been exceedingly glad to have been informed of my intention by Monsieur Isvolsky, and that he earnestly trusted that the conversations would result in a satisfactory understanding, which was desirable not only in the interests of the two countries but in those of the peace of the world. His Majesty added that he considered that the prospects of an arrangement were very favourable now that a new Government had come into office in England, and that he had been pleased to observe that public opinion in my country was well disposed to an understanding with Russia.

I observed that I trusted that public opinion in both countries was beginning to understand each other better, and that it seemed to me of great advantage that the question with which I should have to treat related to matters which affected the interests of Great Britain and Russia alone, and that it would therefore enable Monsieur Isvolsky and myself to conduct our discussions with perfect and untrammelled freedom.

The Emperor expressed his entire concurrence with this view.

Subsequently when conversing with Mr. Spring-Rice, His Majesty spontaneously said that he hoped that the new Russian Minister at Teheran and Mr. Spring-Rice would work cordially together in Persia.

I had told Monsieur Isvolsky previous to my audience that I proposed to mention to the Emperor the fact that we would shortly initiate "pourparlers." I had been given to understand by the French Ambassador that His Majesty disliked any political questions being suddenly sprung upon him, and would observe extreme reticence were such subjects broached unexpectedly.

There was a marked and sincere cordiality in the language of the Emperor and His Majesty's evident desire that the forthcoming discussions should lead to some satisfactory arrangement will doubtless exercise a useful influence over the attitude of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [The substance of this despatch was telegraphed and received on June 4.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, June 6, 1906.

I have not yet broken ground with M. Iswolsky as to Thibet, but I have let him know that I am ready to commence our conversations whenever he is ready. I think that what the Emperor said to me at my audience will be of use and was satisfactory. Acting on a suggestion of the French Ambassador, I had told M. Iswolsky, previous to my audience, that I proposed to mention the matter to the Emperor, and, therefore, the latter was prepared for my observations. His reply had evidently been thought out, as he gave it fluently and with emphasis, while I am told that as a rule if political matters are mentioned to him, he takes refuge in vague answers. I thought it well to state both to the Emperor and to M. Iswolsky that the questions which would be discussed were of interest to our countries alone, so that they might understand that we had no desire to forge a weapon directed against others: and also to impress on them that consultation with others was unnecessary. It was with the same intention that I wished M. Iswolsky to understand that the Bagdad Railway question should be treated as one distinct from those which came under our future general arrangement. I think it well to put a ring fence around our discussions: but I do not feel sure that M. Iswolsky will not take the German Ambassador into his confidence as negotiations proceed. M. Iswolsky confessed to me that his mind at present was a blank on the questions with which we should deal, though he assured me of his earnest desire to facilitate an arrangement by all means in his power. Let us hope that he will act up to these righteous intentions. I have only seen him twice, and then more or less formally, so I cannot yet judge of his disposition or of his calibre.

I was amused at the Emperor's remark to me that he considered that under a Liberal Government in England, there were better chances than formerly of an arrangement. I did not take up the observation, as I was not quite clear as to what he had in his mind. He may think that Russia may obtain better terms.

I noticed a little inclination in the Emperor and also in M. Iswolsky that [*sic*] we were those who were most eagerly seeking for an arrangement, and I thought it well to remark that both sides stood on an equal footing in that respect. They must not regard us as suppliants or they will be too exacting.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 7, 1906.

F.O. 371/177.

D. 8.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 111.)

R. 10.15 P.M.

I commenced this afternoon conversations with Minister for Foreign Affairs on Thibet.

I explained verbally to him our various Conventions with Thibet and China, and communicated to him copy of Adhesion Convention as it is believed to be, and said that I would give him an exact copy when the original was received from Peking.

I also stated to him verbally five bases of our demands, as mentioned in my instructions, giving him the necessary explanation.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked if I would let him have in writing points I had mentioned, and I said that I would communicate them informally to him. I think there can be no objection to my meeting his wishes in that respect.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said he would like to look over all past correspondence before our next meeting, as he was not well versed in questions.

He asked me what course of procedure I proposed to adopt in regard to our discussions.

I said that I thought it would be best to examine each question *seriatim*, and when we had exchanged views on one question, and had practically come to an agreement on it, to pass to the next, and when we had terminated the examination of subjects for discussion to draw up and sign a Convention comprising all the questions.

He agreed, and said that he understood that I did not wish to treat each question as a separate arrangement. I replied that I did not wish for an incomplete Agreement, but that settlement of each question must depend on a general understanding being arrived at.

I trust you will concur.⁽¹⁾

MINUTES.

It is only after we have learnt the Russian views on Thibet, Persia and Afghanistan that we shall be able to judge whether a general agreement is possible, therefore it seems very desirable that we should not go too closely into detail in the preliminary discussions on each question.⁽¹⁾ M. Isvolsky gave no indication of his views on Thibet. It might be desirable, if the I[ndia] O[ffice] concur, to say something to Sir A. Nicolson in the above sense.

E. H.

We have now shown our hand as regards Tibet—we may go on to do it as regards Afghanistan—after that a judicious hint that Russia should show a little of hers about Persia would be useful.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Sir E. Grey concurred in telegram No. 109 to Sir A. Nicolson of June 18, 1906, which reproduces the main part of the first sentence of the minute, adding "and as far as possible the disclosure of the Russian point of view on each question should be equivalent to our own."]

No. 225.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. 871/177.

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 15, 1906.

I told the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires that it might interest his Government to know that we had made definite proposals to Russia for an Agreement respecting Thibet. I gave him confidentially the proposals which we had instructed Sir Arthur Nicolson to make, pointing out that there was nothing really new in them, and what they amounted to was an Agreement for non-interference.

The Japanese Chargé d'Affaires asked me whether we had communicated this to the Russians, and I said we had, but we had not yet got their reply.

He also asked me whether we were discussing any Agreement on any other points.

I told him we had not made any general proposal nor received any from Russia with regard to any other questions, such as Afghanistan and Persia. Troubles were constantly arising in Persia, disturbances and so forth, which needed our attention. And we had hitherto arranged these matters with Russia as they arose in a friendly way. But I thought it worth while to tell him what was passing about Thibet, because that was a part of the world which was covered by our Agreement with Japan. And I

further observed that, if we could make an Agreement with Russia about this and other matters which concerned the Indian Frontier, it would be a very useful additional guarantee of peace.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

[ED. NOTE.—A suggested visit by a British naval squadron to Russia was vetoed by the Emperor Nicholas II, and his reasons given in a telegram of July 12, 1906, to King Edward. The latter, in acknowledging it, telegraphed "Hope visit may take place next year." A visit of representatives of the Duma to London took place at the end of July, to attend the annual conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. On the morning of the opening of the conference, news arrived that the Duma had been dissolved by the Emperor. Sir H. Campbell-Bannermann, in his opening address, referred to the incident and ended with the words "La Duma est morte, vive la Duma." For these details v. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 566-8.]

No. 226.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Foreign Office, August 7, 1906.

. . . .⁽²⁾ Now as to the sequence of the subjects of discussion we know more or less what we want as regards Afghanistan but we have not the faintest idea what the Russians want in Persia and it seems useless to make proposals to them which they will not look at. Our idea has therefore been after submitting to the Russians our views as to Thibet and Afghanistan to ask them what may be their views as to Persia, and if we find we cannot accept them to make counter-proposals of our own. We have not yet got the views of the India office on our proposed instructions to you. We have had the views of the Gov[ernmen]t of India which were quite impossible and to which we have replied. They will probably be overridden by Mr. Morley. As soon as Grey has decided the question of the negotiations we will, if necessary, press the India Office for a definite statement of policy. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The opening and closing sentences of this letter refer to various matters unconnected with the Anglo-Russian negotiations.]

No. 227.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur Nicolson,

Fallodon, Christon Bank, Northumberland,

August 10, 1906.

. . . .⁽²⁾ As to negotiations I *hope* I have now got the instructions ready as to Afghanistan; there is no difficulty at the India Office, but the Indian Gov[ernmen]t has to be consulted and it takes a little time to lead them to the waters of conciliation and get them to agree that they are wholesome.

On Persia I should like the Russians to be invited to say the first word and my idea would be, if they propose something inadmissible to put forward a diagonal line

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter refers to minor internal disturbances in Persia.]

giving them access to the Gulf, but leaving the mouth of the Gulf on our side of the line; in this I am consulting Morley.

But while Russia is on the brink of Revolution it is no good going faster in these matters than is necessary to keep the negotiations alive.

I cannot see how things are to come right in Russia till the present organization and machinery of Government is broken up and that can only be done by Revolution.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 228.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, September 12, 1906.

It is satisfactory that M. Iswolsky should have been frank in letting us know of the overtures of the Persian Gov[ernmen]t to that of Russia for a money advance and for a prospective loan: and also that he should have communicated to us the confidential information which he received in regard to the Persian negotiations with a German Bank. Although it may appear captious to criticize his virtuous disposition, I think that it was, to a certain degree, *force majeure* which induced M. Iswolsky to unbosom himself. It would be difficult for Russia alone at this moment to find the necessary funds: and M. Iswolsky would doubtless prefer a *ménage à deux* to a *ménage à trois* in Persia, especially when the third party would be such an exceedingly active partner as the Emperor William.

At the same time I am afraid that M. Iswolsky shows no great eagerness or activity in pursuing our negotiations. The long promised Draft Convention as to Thibet has not yet made its appearance; and during our recent discussions on Persian affairs when I hinted that I should be glad to know in general outlines his views on our future relations in Persia, he looked blankly at me and said that he had no views at all. This was a little discouraging, so I suggested that perhaps we might soon begin to talk as to Afghanistan. To this he vaguely replied that this would be agreeable; but he did not seem disposed to take up the topic seriously. It is clear that we shall have difficulty in getting him to take the initiative, and I propose to leave him alone for a while on our larger subjects, and endeavour to settle with him the more pressing special Persian questions. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [The omitted paragraph touches on the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line but adds no new information.]

No. 229.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, September 26, 1906.

M. Iswolsky, since my last letter, has made a step or two in advance, and is showing more interest in the negotiations than has been the case for some weeks past. At the same time, I do not conceal from myself that he has confined himself to verbal expressions of his own personal views, and that even with these he has not gone beyond the vaguest outline. Moreover he evidently anticipates some difficulties with the General Staff, but these may not prove to be serious obstacles if the Emperor

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

cordially supports the arrangement as it has been sketched out. In the most favourable circumstances there will, I expect, be considerable delays, as they are slow to move, and have, doubtless much hesitation in committing themselves to paper. I believe that their present weakness renders them more cautious than would perhaps be the case if they were not hampered by their internal difficulties, as they probably fear that we may wish to take advantage of the existing situation to our own benefit. I fully believe in the sincerity of M. Iswolsky, and if I had to deal with him alone, I do not think that the course of the negotiations would be troublesome, though it might be lengthy. . . . (2)

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

(2) [The rest of this letter gives details of suggested further negotiations.]

No. 230.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

British Embassy, Paris, October 22, 1906.

The messenger is just leaving and I have only a very short time in which to tell you that Count Izvolsky came to see me to-day having sent me a message by Count Benckendorff that he wished to see me. What he said was:

The King has been so gracious as to send me an invitation and I should have much liked to be received by His Majesty but to-day was to have been the day named by the King and to-day I had already received an appointment to be received by the President of the Republic. In the present ministerial crisis there is at the present moment nobody with whom I can discuss political and financial matters, but I hope that before I go next Friday there will be a Minister for Foreign Affairs. These are the personal reasons which stand in the way of my going to London, but there are also political objections to my being there in present circumstances. If I went to London the newspapers would make out that negotiations between Russia and England had gone much further than they had in reality. Moreover I might have to discuss matters and questions for which I am not prepared yet to discuss, and suspicion would be caused in quarters which it is very necessary for Russia to *ménager*. Before coming to arrangements with England I must find out at Berlin what interests the German Emperor and his Government consider that Germany has in Persia, not necessarily in order to allow them to stand in the way of an agreement with England but in order to avoid a repetition by Germany of her attitude in the Morocco question and Russia being placed in the dilemma of France. I must also ascertain precisely what are the views of the German Government in regard to the Bagdad Railway question and other matters. I require all this information in order to enable me to judge how far I can go without the risk of meeting with German opposition. In the present position of Russia it is essential to consider German susceptibilities. After Berlin to which I go on Friday I must return direct to Petersburg. I hope to have the honour of being received by His Majesty on a future occasion.

Yours sincerely,
FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

I perfectly understand and appreciate the reasons given.

E.R.

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 10.]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

British Embassy, Paris, October 22, 1906.

I wrote in a great hurry this afternoon to catch the Messenger's train at 4 P.M. and did not fully report my interview with Count Izvolsky. I will now supplement my account and send it by Lord Aberdeen who goes to London by the same train tomorrow.

When Count Izvolsky stated that he could not go further in the negotiations with His Majesty's Government until he had ascertained the views of the German Government I asked him whether he meant that arrangements between Russia and England must be subject to the concurrence of Germany. His answer was, no, but that he must sound the German Government as to their views. They had of their own accord informed the Russian Government that Germany would rejoice at an understanding between Russia and England provided that it took account of German interests and they had stated that their interests in Persia were purely commercial; but he was not prepared to adopt the mode of Monsieur Delcassé in the Morocco question and present Germany with a "fait accompli." In the present position of Russia the Russian Government could not afford to do so. He did not propose to make an arrangement with England subject to German consent but he must ascertain what Germany understood or meant by so-called commercial interests. She had professed to have only commercial interests in Morocco, but the result of taking her at her word had been a very grave tension between Germany and France. He was not prepared to run the risk of the creation of such a situation between Russia and her next door neighbour. I asked him whether the Bagdad Railway would be a German Commercial question to be discussed and he said that he thought that it would be possible to come to terms with Germany on that matter.

Count Izvolsky spoke of his excellent relations with Nicolson who, he said, took a very just and sensible view in regard to the internal affairs of Russia, much assisted thereto by the great knowledge and wise counsels of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace. Order was being gradually re-established. Monsieur Stolypin's nerves had not been in the least affected by the Bomb explosion in his Villa. His Government would maintain order and grant all reasonable reforms.

I met Count Benckendorff late in the afternoon. He asked me whether I had seen Count Izvolsky and I gave him an account of my interview. Count Benckendorff's language was to the same effect as that of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, but he was more explicit. He said that Russia was under great obligations to Germany and was bound to conciliate her as much as possible, that Germany had given notice of the establishment of a German Bank in Persia. There was no knowing to what concessions to Germany that fact might not lead. The sphere in Persia which His Majesty's Government proposed to mark out for England offered no temptations for Germany. It would be in the Russian sphere that She would probably seek concessions of all kinds through the Bank unless Russia came to terms with her. This would be very inconvenient to Russia and the Russian Government must endeavour to obviate such a position. They did not want Germany in Persia, but they must try to come to terms with her. I put it to him that if account was to be taken of all German wishes in Persia an arrangement between Russia and England might become very difficult. She had volunteered the statement that her interests in Persia were purely commercial. Would it not be better to accept that statement and act accordingly than to elicit explanations which might put forward claims which would have to be disregarded if negotiations

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 10.]

between England and Russia were to be successful. Count Benckendorff replied that Russia in present circumstances could not afford to be on bad terms with Germany.

Yours sincerely,
FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 232.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

British Embassy, Paris, October 25, 1906.

As authorized by your private telegram of yesterday afternoon I saw Monsieur Clemenceau this morning and explained to him the position of the negotiations with Russia in regard to Persia, and I gave him an account of my conversations with M. Izvolsky and Count Benckendorff.

M. Clemenceau told me that he had met M. Izvolsky last night at dinner, and that he had impressed on him, in talking of the policy of the French Government, that they were anxious that Russia and England should come to agreements, that France meant to remain the Ally of Russia and the friend of England and would not drop either one or the other.

M. Izvolsky had remarked in reply that personally he was entirely in favour of an understanding with England, but the negotiations must not be hurried on.

Monsieur Clemenceau says that it is evident that Germany has prevented M. Izvolsky's projected visit to London, and that the Emperor who is anxious to revive the Drei Kaiser Bund will endeavour to make terms with Russia behind our back.

M. Clemenceau does not think that it would be advisable that he personally should recur in conversation with M. Izvolsky, when he meets him again, to England, but he will make Monsieur Pichon acquainted confidentially with the position which I had described to him, and he will get M. Pichon to impress on M. Izvolsky—whom he is to meet tomorrow—the advisability from the French point of view of Russia making terms with England.

I asked M. Clemenceau whether he had any idea of what the obligation might be which Russia owed to Germany to which Count Benckendorff had referred. Monsieur Clemenceau said no, perhaps it related to a German intervention in Poland.

Yours sincerely,
FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

Germany is certain to act against us—behind our back.

E.R.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 10.]

No. 233.

Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

Paris, October 26, 1906.

The President of the Council and the Minister for Foreign Affairs paid me the regulation visits this evening on accession to Office.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 10.]

M. Clemenceau told me that he had met the Russian Ambassador at breakfast this morning, that he had spoken to him about the importance of the relations between Russia and England being placed on a good footing; that the Ambassador had entirely concurred, saying that he had always been in favour of arrangements being made to settle questions between Russia and England. When M. Clemenceau suggested that it was to be regretted that M. Izvolsky should have changed his plans and should go to Berlin from here instead of via London, the Ambassador said that M. Izvolsky had never had any intention of going to London. His plans had all been settled some time ago and London was not in the programme. M. Clemenceau, seeing that M. de Nelidow was either badly informed or did not desire to discuss the matter, dropped the subject after saying that he had understood that there was a question to be settled with regard to a loan or an advance to be made to Persia through the intervention of Russia and England.

M. Pichon told me that he had spoken to M. Izvolsky this morning on the subject of the desire of the French Government that Russia and England should be on the best of terms. M. Izvolsky said that such was his wish, but he changed the subject when M. Pichon referred to the change in M. Izvolsky's plans. M. Pichon, however returned to the charge later on and observed that it was a pity that he should go to Berlin without first visiting London. The account which M. Izvolsky then gave of his reasons was the same as he had given to me and which I described to you in my letters of the 22nd instant, and he said that he had every hope of coming to an Agreement with His Majesty's Government in regard to Persia. He was not going to Berlin in order to consult the German Government as to the negotiations with England, but for the purpose of ascertaining precisely what were the interests which they considered Germany had in Persia, and whether they were really only commercial. He wished to avoid a difficulty with Germany and to be able to negotiate with His Majesty's Government with full knowledge of the attitude of that country. He considered that going to London at the present moment would render his object, which was an Agreement with England, more difficult than if he postponed discussions till after a visit to Berlin. The negotiations required great tact, they must not be hurried, for he had a difficult task, viz., to persuade some of his colleagues of the advisability of coming to terms with His Majesty's Government. He felt confident however of success if matters were not hurried. M. Pichon told me that M. Izvolsky appeared to him to be speaking in good faith, and to be really desirous of coming to terms with His Majesty's Government.

Yours sincerely,

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

I shall however always regret that M. Izvolsky was unable to come to London this year.

E.R.

No. 234.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/129.

(No. 333.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Berlin, D. October 29, 1906.

R. November 5, 1906.

Monsieur Izvolsky, who is spending a few days in Berlin on his return to St. Petersburg from Paris, and whose acquaintance I had the honour of making at a party at the Russian Embassy last night, was good enough to call upon me late this afternoon, as he wished to have some conversation with me. He said he was glad to think that a decided improvement had taken place in the relations between our two countries, and he was in hopes that a thorough and complete understanding

might eventually be come to. For this, however, much time and patience would be required. Earnestly desiring, as he did, to arrive at such an understanding, it was necessary for him to take into account public opinion in Russia, which was still very suspicious of any *rapprochement* between England and Russia. Any attempt therefore to hurry on an agreement would probably give rise to difficulties and result in failure.

I observed that when His Excellency spoke of "public opinion" he referred not only to what was understood by the term in other countries, but also to the opinion of highly placed personages in Russia, not excluding perhaps some of His Excellency's colleagues. He did not deny that this was so, and went on to say that he had been struck by the admirable manner in which the English Deputation which had proposed to visit Russia had been dissuaded from carrying out their intention. The visit would certainly have been inopportune, and would have caused embarrassment to the Government. Proposals had indeed been made to prevent the Deputation from going either to St. Petersburg or Moscow. He had strongly opposed these proposals and had insisted that no coercive measures should be taken against the Deputation. He attributed the abandonment of the visit to the good sense of the newspaper correspondents and the British Colony and perhaps more especially to the presence of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace in St. Petersburg, who had been able to give good advice. His Excellency also spoke in terms of the warmest praise of Sir Arthur Nicolson, who on this and indeed on every occasion, had acted admirably. Although he had been but a comparatively short time in Russia, he had obtained a clear insight into the internal situation, which it was very difficult for any foreigner to understand. He was indeed the right man in the right place, and his clear and sound judgment would be of the greatest utility in carrying on the complicated negotiations which Monsieur Isvolsky sincerely trusted would result in a satisfactory understanding.

On my saying that a beginning had been made by the two Governments agreeing to a joint advance to Persia, Monsieur Isvolsky said that that was a step in the right direction.⁽¹⁾ He greatly regretted the incident of the Seistan Telegraph,⁽²⁾ of which he was in complete ignorance when Sir Arthur Nicolson brought it to his notice. He had given orders that the *status quo* was to be maintained, and he had therefore been annoyed at hearing of the incident which had now been explained to be a matter of technical detail. I told Monsieur Isvolsky that my previous knowledge of Persia made me appreciate the difficulties of the situation. The Persians were very suspicious and could not understand why England and Russia should wish to come to terms, and feared that any arrangement between the two Great Powers could only be brought about at the expense of Persia. It would also be necessary to overcome the rivalry which was almost traditional between the agents of the two Governments. I knew from personal experience that it was perfectly possible for the British and Russian Ministers to remain on friendly terms, and I looked back with pleasure to my friendly intercourse with Monsieur Butzow, when we were colleagues at Teheran. Monsieur Isvolsky said that the appointment of Sir Cecil Spring Rice as British Minister at Teheran had given him the liveliest satisfaction. Sir Cecil was well acquainted both with Russia and Persia. He was on good terms with his Russian colleague. He would understand how necessary it was for Russia not merely to protect her enormous commercial interests in Persia, but also to maintain her secular traditions. There could be no doubt of the sincerity of his desire for a good understanding between England and Russia, and his knowledge and experience would be of great assistance in bringing it about. The accounts of the state of the Shah's health were most unsatisfactory, but Monsieur Isvolsky did not anticipate any complications on His Majesty's death and he believed that the Valiahd, being supported both by England and Russia, would succeed his father peacefully.

Monsieur Isvolsky referred to his recent visit to Paris. On his arrival there, he

(1) [The details of this negotiation are given *infra*, pp. 378-89.]

(2) [*v. infra*, p. 390, Nos. 342-3, *sqq.*]

had called on Monsieur Bourgeois, who had just ceased to be Minister. The fact of his arriving during the Ministerial crisis had, however, had the advantage of enabling him to have a longer conversation with the President than perhaps would otherwise have been the case. Monsieur Fallières had stated that he had made it a condition of intrusting Monsieur Clemenceau with the formation of the Ministry that there should be no change in the Foreign Policy of France. No doubt apprehensions had been felt in certain quarters at the fact of Monsieur Clemenceau having become Prime Minister, but Monsieur Isvolsky was convinced that he would pursue a prudent and peaceful Policy with regard to Foreign Affairs and would devote himself more especially to internal questions. He would certainly put in force the law with regard to the Church, but he had announced that he intended to do so without having recourse to force. Monsieur Clemenceau was now at the head of a homogeneous Ministry, but it was doubtful how far this increased his power. The Ministers whom he had selected did not command many votes in the Chamber, and Monsieur Isvolsky had gathered that the general impression in Paris was that his Ministry would not be of long duration, as the other groups in the Chamber would before long combine against him.

Since he had been in Berlin, Monsieur Isvolsky had been received by the Emperor and had had a long conversation with Prince Bülow, with whom he was going to dine to-night.⁽¹⁾ He need not tell me how extraordinarily sensitive the Germans were with regard to any arrangement which might be come to between any two countries without their having been consulted. He was therefore not surprised at being told, shortly after his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs, by the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, that the German Government, while hailing with satisfaction any arrangement between England and Russia, which would contribute towards the maintenance of the Peace of the world, expected to be consulted with regard to any points in such an agreement which might affect German interests. He had replied that the understanding which might eventually be arrived at between England and Russia merely aimed at removing the causes of friction which were due to their respective interests in the East. It certainly would not be directed against any other country, and he asked what were the German interests to which the Ambassador had alluded. The answer had been, as he had expected, the Bagdad Railway. He had expressed the opinion that the Bagdad Railway should be considered as a German Undertaking and that Germany should certainly be consulted in any question connected with it. As Germany was seeking for the participation of English, French and Russian Capital in this undertaking, he was strongly of opinion that any negotiations on the subject should be conducted by the four Powers conjointly and not separately. During his recent visit to Paris, he had again expressed this opinion, in which the French Government concurred, and he had repeated it in his conversation with Prince Bülow, whom, he believed, he had convinced that an understanding between England and Russia would not in any way be directed against Germany. It would, he said, be ridiculous, to suppose that Russia, considering her geographical position, and the internal condition of the country could deliberately seek a quarrel with Germany.

There was one question which Monsieur Isvolsky considered should at once engage the attention of the great Powers, and that was the reform of the Judiciary in Macedonia. He had not yet heard whether the Sultan had agreed to the conditions contained in the last Note presented by the Ambassadors at Constantinople on the subject of the increase of the Customs Duties. He had, however, little doubt that he would do so, and that sufficient money would then be found to defray the expenses of the Administration. He considered it essential that the judicial reform should then be undertaken, and he believed that if this were done, the Civil Agents and the Financial Commission would be able to effect a real improvement in the condition of the country. He did not anticipate any immediate complications in the Balkans,

⁽¹⁾ [v. G.P. XXII, pp. 35-7, 43-5.]

such as would undoubtedly have broken out if the Powers had permitted the annexation of Crete by Greece. The Bulgarians would in that case certainly have demanded some territorial compensation and would have resorted to force, had it been denied them. I said that it appeared to me that this demand of the Bulgarians was unreasonable, as none of the other Balkan States had received compensation when Eastern Roumelia was united to Bulgaria. Monsieur Isvolsky smiled and said that this took place so long ago that people had forgotten all about it. I asked whether he thought that there would be danger of complications arising in the event of the death of the Sultan. He replied that he did not see any reason for alarm, and he thought that the Sultan's successor would be allowed to take peaceful possession of the throne. He had been glad to hear that the Sultan had recovered his health, and that his illness had not been so severe as had been generally supposed. In his opinion a more serious situation would be created if the Emperor of Austria were to disappear from the scene. As long as His Majesty lived, it was not probable that there would be any serious trouble in his dominions, and the demand of the Hungarians for separation from Austria would not probably take effect during His Majesty's lifetime, which it was earnestly to be hoped might be prolonged for many years.⁽²⁾

On my observing that I had been glad to see that there had been some improvement in the internal condition of Russia, Monsieur Isvolsky said that this certainly was the case, and was due to the wise action of Monsieur Stolypin, who was admirably fitted to conduct the internal affairs at this difficult moment. He was a man of great strength of character and very calm. The terrible calamity which had befallen his family had raised him in the general estimation as, even on the night of the catastrophe itself, he devoted himself to his work as usual. He never flinched, and although he would resolutely maintain order, he was a "progressive" man.

On taking leave of me, M. Isvolsky again expressed his great satisfaction that Sir Arthur Nicolson was now His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and his sincere hope that the negotiations in which they were engaged would lead to a complete understanding between England and Russia.

I will take the opportunity of the Messenger who will leave Berlin on the evening of the 1st proximo for St. Petersburg and Teheran to send a copy of this Despatch to Sir Arthur Nicolson and Sir Cecil Spring Rice.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCEILLES.

(2) [This paragraph is also printed in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 185, No. 148.]

No. 235.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, October 31, 1906.

I entirely agree with your private letter of the 24th⁽²⁾ as to the course and description of the Persian negotiations. So to-day I have sent an official telegram, which is founded on your letter and will enable you to set the ball rolling.

Iswolsky knows that we must be suspicious of his visits to Germany, and I should like him to feel that we expect some frankness as to what passed between him

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

(2) [Not reproduced.]

and the Germans, and some progress with the negotiations, in order to prove to us that the Germans are not putting spokes in the wheel.

You might find out too whether Iswolsky discovered the present dispositions of the Germans about the Bagdad Railway, and what his own views are. I am willing that the line should be made as an international affair, but that means that Russia as well as ourselves must come into it somehow.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 236.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, November 7, 1906.

I think that we can be satisfied that, so far as our negotiations are concerned, M. Iswolsky did not enter into, and was not asked to enter into, any embarrassing engagements in Berlin. He was, I am sure, quite frank with me as to what passed during his visit, and I have reported his declarations in a despatch.⁽²⁾ He is evidently relieved at the removal of the fear which was haunting him that Germany would step in at a given moment and make matters uncomfortable for Russia, and I think that the assurances which he has received have stimulated him to take up the discussions more actively than he has hitherto done. He assured me that he would devote "all his energies" to the task, and, laying his hand on his heart, he said that he was "honestly and sincerely" desirous of arriving at an understanding which he was convinced was the right policy for Russia to pursue. He will, I doubt not, still plead for time, and point out the strong opposition which he will have to meet. Whence inspired I know not, but one or two of the papers here have now begun to tilt against any understanding with us, and intimate that we are taking advantage of the temporary weakness of Russia to extort terms from her in Persia to which it would be most imprudent for her to subscribe. I imagine that the views of the military party, and of other Chauvins, is that Russia has secured a preliminary footing in Seistan, which she hopes to render firmer as time goes on, and that she is thereby obtaining an admirable strategic position from which she should not recede. M. Iswolsky particularly hinted this to me. These opponents enquired what quid pro quo Russia would, or could, obtain in Persia if she retired from Seistan: and I expect that if M. Iswolsky says to his critics that we propose to give Russia a free hand in the north, they would reply that this she practically enjoys already. In short the critics assert that we are giving too little and asking too much: and this perplexes M. Iswolsky.

He told me that he must have weighty arguments with which to combat his opponents and be able to show them that they will obtain compensatory advantages for any concessions that he may make. He seemed to doubt if peace and good will were strong enough arguments, or whether the Russian mind was in a mood, generally speaking, to be willing to make sacrifices in order to secure a good understanding with us. There is something in all this, and I do not at all underestimate the difficulty of M. Iswolsky's task. In our negotiations with France we had something substantial to surrender and which she eagerly desired i.e. our position in Morocco, and she was willing to treat and give a good quid pro quo for it. In the present case we are not in a position either in Persia, Afghanistan or Thibet, to make any great concessions or as our hostile critics say any at all. I indicate these considerations to you, not that they have been put forward by M. Iswolsky, but because I think

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 412-3, No. 369.]

that they are at the back of his mind, or, to be more accurate, because they have been put there by others. They may later, when they take fuller shape and form, lead him to sound us as to whether we would not perhaps be disposed, to satisfy his opponents and in order to strengthen his hands, to grant some concessions elsewhere. I think that we should be prepared for some proposals as to a deal over the Near East. M. Iswolsky has not foreshadowed this to me, even in the most indirect way, but I think that, when he is pushed hard by his opponents, he might ask us if we would support or, in any case, not oppose Russia in obtaining some modifications of certain Treaty clauses which hamper and restrict her liberty of action. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [The rest of this long letter gives details as to Russian public opinion on Anglo-Russian relations.]

No. 237.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Bertie,

Foreign Office, November 8, 1906.

I ought to have given you before what I believe is the true history of M. Izvolsky's movements. He never intended so far as we know to come to London, but hearing that he was at Paris the King expressed a wish that he should come to London. We agreed however that this would not be desirable yet: it would give rise to rumours in excess of the truth; negotiations were not ripe for a visit here, and to press him to come would give an impression that we wanted to hustle him.

It was therefore the King's verbal invitation and not any change in his own plans, which was the origin of M. Izvolsky's explanation for not coming. I only mention it now because I see from your letter of the 4th that you have another version.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 10.]

No. 238.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/80.

(No. 349.) Confidential.

Sir,

Berlin, D. November 9, 1906.

R. November 12, 1906.

I called by appointment on Prince Bülow at 6.30 this evening to take leave of him before my approaching departure for England on leave of absence. His Serene Highness began by congratulating me on the occasion of the King's Birthday. He had ventured to send a Telegram to His Majesty, for whom he entertained the warmest sentiments of gratitude and admiration. He earnestly hoped that His Majesty's life might be a very prolonged one to the benefit not only of his own Kingdom, but of the world, to the Peace of which he had so largely contributed.

His Serene Highness referred to the recent visit of Monsieur Isvolsky to Berlin. He had known Monsieur Isvolsky for many years and had a high opinion of his abilities and straightforwardness, and his conversation on this occasion had given him great satisfaction. Monsieur Isvolsky had spoken of the arrangement with England which he hoped to bring about, and explained that its only object was to remove certain

causes of friction in the East, and thus contribute to the maintenance of Peace. It was not directed against any other Power, and certainly not against Germany. I told Prince Bülow that this tallied exactly with what Monsieur Isvolsky had said to me, and that he had added, in speaking of the Balkan Peninsula, that judiciary reform in Macedonia was essential to enable the Civil Agents and the Financial Commission to effect any real improvement in the condition of the country. Prince Bülow said that Monsieur Isvolsky had mentioned this point to him and had at the same time expressed the firm intention of the Russian Government to pursue a peaceful policy in the Balkans as indeed everywhere else. He had, however, spoken at greater length of the difficulties created for the Russian Government by the internal condition of the country. It would be impossible in his opinion for the Government to withdraw the liberties granted by the Czar but at the same time it was necessary to restore order and to put an end to the assassinations and bomb-throwing to which the Revolutionaries had resorted. On the one hand it was necessary to repress Terrorism, on the other, it was necessary to avoid going back to the undoubted evils of the former régime. It was no easy task, and Monsieur Isvolsky (? Stolypin),⁽¹⁾ who was admirably qualified to carry it out was being opposed by personages in high places who accused him of being too liberal. This long conversation had convinced Prince Bülow that Russia, as was only natural after the losses she had incurred in the war with Japan, earnestly desired to pursue a policy of peace and to avoid anything in the nature of adventure. His Serene Highness saw no reason to fear any disturbance of the Peace in any quarter. During the summer he had seen the Prince of Bulgaria, the Crown Prince of Greece and Prince Ferdinand of Roumania. Each had complained bitterly of the injustice with which his own particular country had been treated and the undue favour which had been shown to the other two. He repeated that he saw no cause for anxiety and he expressed his great pleasure that the relations between England and Germany had become so much better. He had always believed that the tension which had existed between the two countries had been due to misunderstandings and he referred to the fact that about two years ago the Emperor, against his advice, had insisted that Count Metternich should be summoned to Berlin to state whether England contemplated an attack on Germany. Count Metternich had assured the Emperor that there was absolutely no truth in the report and had had the courage to add that there were people in England who really believed that Germany intended to attack England, and that the German fleet had been built with that sole object. . . .⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

FRANK LASCELLES.

⁽¹⁾ [Added by Sir E. Grey.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this long despatch refers to the internal situation in Germany.]

No. 239.

Sir E. Egerton to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/129.

(No. 199.) Most Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. November 13, 1906.

R. November 17, 1906.

The Russian Ambassador told me today that he sincerely trusted that the negotiations between His Majesty's Government and that of the Emperor with a view to an understanding on certain Asiatic questions were progressing favourably—as he was disturbed to learn—not directly from Monsieur Isvolsky himself, but by a letter from a sure source—that in Berlin the Russian Foreign Minister had been given plainly to understand that Russia must take one side or another. Friendship with Germany must exclude arrangements to be made with another Power.

In fact the form in which the German view was put showed a roughness of method more likely to offend than terrify.

Though M. Mouraviev considered that the Berlin Foreign Office had been tactless and unwise he did not actually tell me that they had absolutely failed in intimidating M. Isvolsky, but said he had no official information.

I have, &c.

EDWIN H. EGERTON.

No. 240.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/129.

(No. 762.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. November 15, 1906.

Sir,

R. November 26, 1906.

The French Ambassador, M. Bompard, informed me to-day that M. Isvolsky had spoken to him as to the conversations which he had held in Berlin both in regard to the Franco-Russian alliance, and the negotiations which were proceeding between the Governments of Russia and Great Britain. As regards the latter question the language of M. Isvolsky appeared to have been identical with that which he had held to me, and which I had the honour to report to you in my despatch No. 745 of the 7th instant.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency did not enter into details with M. Bompard as to our discussions, nor did he mention the points on which we were treating, but he told the French Ambassador that he anticipated that they would occupy a long time, as he had to remove many deep-rooted prejudices and traditions which had been inherited by so many sections of the Russian political and Military world. He was himself an ardent advocate of an understanding with Great Britain, and he intended to tackle the difficulties ahead of him with perseverance and energy. He was confident that eventually his efforts would meet with success, but he trusted that time would be accorded to him as undue haste might jeopardize the possibility of an agreement.

I told M. Bompard that I was convinced of the sincerity and goodwill of M. Isvolsky, and that I had found him greatly reassured by the assurances which he had received in Berlin that the German Government had no desire to hamper the negotiations. These assurances had, according to the telegraphic reports in this morning's papers, been reiterated by Prince Bülow in the Reichstag, and I trusted that full effect would be given to them. It seemed to me that the allusions of Prince Bülow to the Anglo-French *entente* had been a little guarded and cautious, and I asked M. Bompard what impression the remarks of the Chancellor had produced upon him.

His Excellency replied that the observations of Prince Bülow confirmed a conjecture which he had formed some time previously. It appeared to him probable that the German Government had obtained from M. Isvolsky assurances that if Russia entered into an understanding with Great Britain she must act as a check on any tendency either on the part of France or of England to isolate Germany. He believed that there was still a suspicion in the minds of the German Government that the Anglo-French *entente* might lead to the formation of a ring round Germany, and that the inclusion indirectly of Russia might complete the circle. He doubted if Germany would have expressed her good-will towards an Anglo-Russian understanding unless she had been satisfied that Russia would, in no circumstances, agree to such an understanding being turned to the disadvantage of her Western neighbour. There was naturally no such intention, but the doubts existed, and the occasion of the visit of M. Isvolsky to Berlin had been taken to make sure that Russia would not be led astray.

I said that M. Isvolsky had quite rightly informed the German Government that our negotiations had solely in view the removal of causes of friction between the two countries, and that there was no design or intention to interfere with the interests of

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 412-3, No. 369.]

Germany. He had enquired what those interests were so that he might steer clear of them, and he had been satisfied that they were merely of a commercial nature, with which any agreement we might make would not clash.

M. Bompard said he was well aware of that, but that at Berlin they had been a little uneasy. He added that M. Isvolsky had spontaneously assured him that the reports which had been current as to a projected revival of an alliance between the three Emperors were pure myths; and that he had stated clearly both to the Emperor William and Prince Bülow that the basis of Russian foreign policy was the alliance with France.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 241.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Foreign Office, November 28, 1906.

Many thanks for your letter. We are sending you lots of grist today which ought to carry you on a bit in the negotiations.

Poklewsky asked me today what progress was being made and I told him that we had actually drawn up a sketch of a text for an agreement about Persia which we were sending you. He then said that as the negotiations were now an open secret, public opinion in Russia was already beginning to demand that they should also deal with questions of the Near and Far East. He mentioned in particular the passage of the Dardanelles and that some recognition should be made of the *status quo* in the Far East which would have a moral effect upon the Japanese of whose proceedings they are very nervous. This, he added, need not clash in any way with the stipulations of our Treaty of Alliance. I told him that we would be very glad to consider any proposals which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t might submit to us but that they must emanate from them as it is impossible for us to know what they wanted. To this he agreed.

You will see from a mem[orandum] which Grey is sending you in a private letter how far we are able to go in the Dardanelles question,⁽²⁾ but as regards any recognition by us of the *status quo* in the Far East it is very important that we do nothing which might impair the value of the Japanese alliance. However we have nothing to do but to wait and let them formulate what they want. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 58-60, *Ed. note.*]

⁽³⁾ [The letter closes with a general reference to Persian affairs.]

No. 242.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 592.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 30, 1906.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires called here on the 28th instant and inquired what progress was being made with the negotiations relating to Persia.

Mr. Poklewsky, who in my absence was received by Sir C. Hardinge, was informed that on our side the negotiations were being steadily pursued, and that we were even communicating to Y[our] E[xc]cellency the sketch of a possible text for an agreement relating to Persia which might satisfy the demands of both countries without laying itself open to the charge of being an infringement of the principle of the "open door," and being one to which the German Government might raise objections.

He then inquired if the proposed agreement was to be restricted to Persia and Central Asia, and was informed, in reply, that it was only in those countries that Great Britain found herself in conflict with Russia.

He said that now that the negotiations were an open secret there was a considerable public opinion in Russia in favour of a modification of the regulations for the passage of the Straits of the Dardanelles, and that the Russian Government were very uneasy as to the proceedings of the Japanese in the Far East and would be very pleased if they could obtain from His Majesty's Government a recognition of the *status quo* which would have a certain moral effect upon the Japanese and need not clash with the conditions of our Japanese alliance.

Sir C. Hardinge replied that he felt sure that he was faithfully interpreting my views in saying that I should welcome any proposal which would make for peace in the Far East, that this and the question of the Dardanelles were not matters in which Great Britain and Russia were solely interested as in Central Asian questions, and that since it would be impossible for us to know the wishes of the Russian Government, it must be for them to formulate their proposals. It was quite certain that these latter would be considered here most carefully and as favourably as possible.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

No. 243.

Extract from Annual Report for Russia for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir A. Nicolson, No. 4 of January 2, 1907,
R. January 7, 1907.)

(1.)—*Foreign Relations of Russia.*

F.O. 371/318.

When a country has but recently emerged from a disastrous war and is passing through a grave internal crisis, some time must necessarily be allowed to elapse before its foreign policy can be determined. The problems with which Russia is confronted are of vital importance to her future; the mode in which they will be solved is still obscure, and the position which she will assume among the Great Powers is difficult to predict. It would, in these circumstances, be prudent to abstain from any speculations and from any attempt to cast the horoscope of this Empire. I propose, therefore, to confine myself to a survey of the present relations between Russia and those countries with which she chiefly comes into contact.

2. It is desirable to commence with that country with which Russia has contracted an alliance, which her Foreign Minister is stated to have recently characterized as forming the foundation-stone of her foreign policy. This alliance, at the time of its formation, was perhaps natural and necessary in view of the existing European combinations and of the conditions of international relations. It has, since its inception, been cemented by financial interests, and has been subjected to no serious strain which might have weakened its stability. Whether each party has in the political field reaped great advantages from it, is perhaps a debatable question. France received, I believe, little encouragement when her relations with Great Britain were in a critical condition, nor when subsequently the menacing attitude of Germany caused anxiety, and, to a certain degree, trepidation in the minds of the French people. At the recent Algeiras Conference it is true that Russia afforded valuable assistance, and this should be accounted to the credit of the alliance.

3. Opinions, as far as I have been able to judge, vary here as to the attitude of France during the recent war, and some are ready to question whether she might not have advanced a little beyond the benevolent neutrality which she observed. During the peace negotiations, moreover, it is not considered that France was markedly in the

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foreground or that her good offices were especially active and efficacious. Still the unstinted financial assistance which France has during recent times cheerfully provided is doubtless a bond between the two countries. But if the union be based on financial considerations only, they assume the character of relations between creditor and debtor which, though necessarily intimate, are not always the most agreeable.

4. Moreover, of late public opinion in France has not been very favourably disposed to the governing classes in Russia. Some of the most outspoken and harshest criticisms on what are considered to be the faults, errors, and delinquencies of the Russian Government were to be found in the responsible organs of the French press, and the tone in which these criticisms were delivered increased the annoyance and displeasure which the criticisms themselves occasioned. In the ranks of the several opposition parties these homilies were doubtless welcomed and their lessons appreciated; but I did not find that French opinion, even in those circles, was so much valued as I should have anticipated.

5. From what I have been able to ascertain, I should be inclined to infer that neither the present internal situation in France nor her external position inspires much respect or sympathy in many classes in this country. In those quarters in which, in any case up to the present, the direction of the foreign policy of Russia chiefly lies, the advent to office in France of a Government with an advanced Socialistic programme is viewed with disquietude and disfavour; while the anti-Clerical policy of the French Government is regarded with much disapproval. Moreover, there are doubts whether the material and moral force of France would at a critical moment render her a valuable ally. There is among many an impression that France is breaking away from fundamental principles which should form the base rock of every State as of every individual, and that she is governed by Socialistic ideas which the ruling class in this country considers are fatal and subversive. Moreover, there is an impression that both in the army and the navy of France discipline has been greatly relaxed, and that political party considerations have too potent an influence in both services. Those in authority here have had some bitter experiences of late of the dangers and evils of slack discipline and political propaganda in the military forces, and they fear that their ally may afford examples which may encourage disturbing elements in their own services.

6. I do not know if the alliance with France is for a definite or indefinite period, or whether it is terminated at the wish of one of the Signatories, but I feel assured that the Emperor will abide by its provisions, and will maintain its integrity for the duration of its existence.⁽¹⁾ But I feel equally assured that, though the letter of the alliance will be observed, in many influential quarters the union between Socialistic freethinking France and Orthodox Russia is not a sympathetic one.

7. The relations between the Russian Court and Government and those of Germany are at the present time intimate and cordial. I should indeed be inclined to go further, and to state that German influence is to-day predominant both at the Court and in Government circles. The sympathy shown by the German Court and Government, and by a considerable portion of the German press, during the period of storm and stress through which this country has recently been passing has awakened, I have little doubt, a feeling of gratitude in the hearts of those who were fearful of impending political and social ruin. I am naturally not in a position to state what is the frequency and tenor of the communications which may pass between the Courts of Berlin and

(1) [v. A. F. Pribram: *Secret Treaties*, Harvard University Press (1921), II, pp. 204-225; and the French *Documents diplomatiques: L'alliance franco-russe*, Paris (1918). The military convention, which accompanied the assurances of alliance, was approved by the Emperor Alexander III on December 27, 1893. Article 6 of this convention provides that it shall have "la même durée que le Triple Alliance." This Triple Alliance was renewed in 1896 and periodically after that until 1914. In fact, however, article 6 of the military convention was altered in 1899, and the reference to the Triple Alliance was then eliminated. The terms of the military convention therefore became identical with those of the diplomatic agreement, and this apparently had the effect of prolonging the Franco-Russian alliance *sine die*. For the reasons requiring absolute secrecy see S. B. Fay: *Origins of the War*, New York (1929), Vol. I, pp. 116-21.]

St. Petersburg, but I do not think that I should greatly err were I to assume that advice and consolation were afforded in ample measure by the Sovereign and statesmen of Germany.

8. To those who hold at present the reins of government in Russia, the German Constitution appears as one which could in great measure be suitably adapted to the needs of this country, while the vigorous personality of the German Emperor, the efficiency of the German army and navy, and the competency of the German bureaucracy, all give an appearance of strength and solidity which cause a great impression. My own opinion is that if the Emperor and the Russian Government were free from any other political ties, they would gladly form an intimate alliance with Germany, who represents, in their view, the stoutest bulwark of the monarchical principle combined with the strongest military force on the Continent. I am frequently told that Germans, though feared, are not popular in Russia. I venture to think that it is exceedingly difficult to appraise national likes and dislikes, or to assert that they are abiding sentiments. To my mind for practical purposes they do not form a dominating factor in determining political alliances or international combinations.

9. The interests of Germany and Russia do not run directly counter to each other, with perhaps one exception, which I admit is a large one, I allude to German policy in regard to the Ottoman Empire, and the extension of German influence in Asia Minor eastwards towards Mesopotamia and possibly Persia. But in Europe and in Poland the interests of the two countries are not divergent, while in the Far East they have common aims, or, to be more accurate, a common danger to resist. The "Yellow Peril," whether Chinese or Japanese, is regarded as a menace to both, though more directly and immediately to Russia. Furthermore, they have in a sense, similar internal difficulties with which to contend, more acute and more intense in Russia, but the two Governments are animated with the same desire that these difficulties should be encountered, and if possible, averted, though they may employ different means in combating them.

10. I should also state that the maintenance and extension of German influence are more directly and more skilfully managed here than I have observed to be the case in other countries. The alternate hectoring and cajolery, which are a distinctive feature of German diplomacy in some countries, are not employed here. A suave, conciliatory attitude and a gentle solicitude are the characteristics of German diplomacy in this capital. There are few external signs that the German Embassy is more favoured than others, but as the intimacy of the relations is maintained chiefly by private correspondence or by confidential reports not only between the two Sovereigns, but also by the Ambassador, the military Plenipotentiary, and the Naval Attaché, there is no necessity for any visible acknowledgment of what, to my mind, is the privileged position enjoyed by Germany in high as well as in influential quarters. Apart from the fact that close and confidential relations exist between the two Courts and the two Governments, which the recent evolution of the democratic movement has strengthened and fostered, there is also the desire on the part of the Russian Government to keep on good terms with the powerful western neighbour whose military strength is so superior to their own. I may be travelling beyond the limits prescribed to me in touching upon a question affecting the international position of Germany, but I would remark that, notwithstanding what may have occurred at the Algeiras Conference and on other occasions, when in the eyes of the general public Germany appeared to be almost isolated, there is an impression here that the German Empire is the dominating factor on the European Continent, and that, whatever temporary checks the German Emperor may experience, and whatever difficulties he may occasionally encounter in his own dominions, no decision of any importance in international relations can be adopted without his imprimatur and sanction.

11. I do not wish to maintain that German influence is universal throughout all circles in Russia. The remarks which I have ventured to make apply to the feeling existing at the Court and among the Government, and in a great measure among military circles. These, at the present moment, are the governing factors in Russia

who direct the foreign policy of this Empire. Among commercial and industrial circles, in the press, and among many public men there may prevail a different opinion. There are some who consider that Germany is indirectly the cause of the late disastrous war, and that her occupation of Kiao-chau led to the seizure of Port Arthur with all its baleful consequences. There are others who view with apprehension German competition in commercial matters, others dislike German propaganda in the Baltic Provinces, while many others regard with disfavour German militarism, German bureaucratic methods, and the general cast of German administration and government.

Hungary.

12. I should question if the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary have ever been so cordial and so smooth as they are at the period at which I am writing. The two countries are acting in unison in the Balkan Peninsula, where formerly their interests were divergent, and in regard to the Polish question their views and aims are practically identical. These relations are greatly facilitated and strengthened by the respect and affection which the Emperor Francis Joseph has inspired here, by the friendly feelings which the Emperor of Russia has for the Austrian Heir Apparent, and also by the popularity which the present Minister for Foreign Affairs at Vienna succeeded in attaining during his twenty years' residence in St. Petersburg. These good relations naturally tend to facilitate the maintenance of the connection between the Russian and German Courts to which I have already called attention.

13. I have nothing to say in regard to the relations between Russia and Italy; they are friendly and correct. But Italy does not play an important part in this capital, and, beyond the fact that negotiations for a new Commercial Treaty are in progress, there is no special feature which requires notice.

14. The relations between Russia and China would, I submit, be better discussed from Peking than from here. From what I have been able to ascertain, the Chinese Legation here participates but indirectly in the treatment of affairs between Russia and the Celestial Empire, which are dealt with by the Russian Legation at the Chinese capital. I have on more than one occasion endeavoured to ascertain from the Chinese Minister his views on the several questions which are pending between the two Empires, and especially in regard to the situation in Mongolia, but I have observed that his knowledge of what is passing on those matters is limited. The new situation which has been produced by the results of the late war in the Far East doubtless necessitates a reconsideration by the Russian Government of their policy in those regions. At present schemes are being discussed in regard to railway extension, but sufficient time has not yet elapsed to permit of any decision being reached on these points. Moreover, no definite steps can be taken in regard to them until the necessary funds are available, and the sanction of the Duma obtained. The policy of Russia may be for a time on defensive lines and be circumscribed by circumstances, and, although she may appreciate the fact that her action in Manchuria has been checked, there are other fields—Mongolia for instance—where she might display more activity, and endeavour to secure a position which might compensate her for the losses which she has sustained elsewhere. These are conjectures, and the future policy of Russia will greatly depend on the ultimate development of the situation within her own dominions.

15. I have reported on the difficulties which have arisen in regard to the negotiations which are at present being conducted in St. Petersburg between the Russian and Japanese Governments. As these are matters of immediate moment, which may change their character during the preparation of this Report, I would prefer to deal with them in separate despatches during the course of the various phases through which they may pass. I think it may be stated broadly that no revengeful feelings exist in Russia against Japan. The war was an unpopular one, and since its unsuccessful termination it is condemned by many and regretted by all. If Japan is not exacting in her demands, and adopts a conciliatory attitude towards Russia, I think that the great majority of the Russian public would be contented to live on fairly amicable terms with their late adversary. I doubt if there would be a great desire to try conclusions again with so redoubtable a foe, and, as I have mentioned, Russia

will possibly turn her attention to the regions where she may not directly meet with her former antagonist.

16. With respect to Persia and Central Asian affairs generally, the present moment is not one when they could be discussed with any advantage. The negotiations which are proceeding in respect to our future relations in Persia may, before their conclusion, enable a clearer insight to be obtained into the aims and views of Russia in those quarters of the globe. Persia.

17. I have left the question of the relations between Great Britain and Russia to the last, and, although it is the one on which it might be expected that I should be able to write with greater confidence than on others, I confess that I find considerable difficulty in forming a clear and decided opinion on the subject. Generally speaking, I think that it would be possible to say that the feelings of mistrust and hostility which on occasions in the past were manifested are gradually passing away from many minds; but without a more prolonged residence and a wider acquaintance I should hesitate to affirm to what extent a better disposition has spread. It should not be forgotten that, apart from the traditional rivalry by which many minds in Russia are swayed, other factors have of late entered into the account, and which influence certain sections of public opinion in various diverse ways. There are many who consider that Japan would never have ventured on the war unless she had felt assured that Great Britain would loyally observe the provisions of the Treaty of Alliance. Then during the war certain incidents occurred which rendered for a time relations difficult and strained, and since the war other incidents arose which were not peculiarly pleasing and gratifying to certain circles. The above facts produced some impression, which may not be effaced within a limited period. Great Britain.

18. The real question to examine is whether the traditional rivalry and divergence of policy which have hitherto been conspicuous in every international question of special interest to the two Powers are giving place to a sincere desire to arrive at a fair and amicable understanding. The results of our pending negotiations will, in a great measure, answer this question; and it would be of interest to ascertain with some degree of certainty what are the views held on the above subject at the Court, by the Cabinet, by the military party, the press, and by the intelligent public. Owing to various circumstances personal contact with the Court is exceedingly rare, more infrequent probably than in any other country, and therefore the opportunities of judging of the views held there are merely indirect, and not entirely satisfactory. From what I have been able to gather I should say that, in principle, there was no objection to an understanding with Great Britain, and that if the Foreign Minister were in a position to submit a project, it would be accepted without demur. At the same time I do not anticipate that any active stimulus to the conclusion of an Agreement will emanate from the Court, or that any great eagerness will be shown to further the negotiations. In regard to the Cabinet, I think that I could say with confidence that the majority of its members are quite willing that an arrangement should be concluded, provided always that the interests of Russia were safeguarded, and that a fair bargain was struck. Should the negotiations of the Russian Government with Japan enter into an unfavourable phase, this may act with disadvantage on the discussions between Russia and Great Britain. The military party, to my mind, are a stumbling block; and in this party I would include all those whom I may term militant Russians, the successors in a sense of the old Slavophiles. These latter do not perhaps play so conspicuous or so vigorous a part as was the case some twenty years ago; but I understand that their activity, though less noticeable, is none the less prosecuted and is not in abeyance. In regard to this party I should like to obtain some fuller information, as should they recover some of the influence they formerly possessed, they would make that influence felt on the relations of Russia not only with Great Britain, but also with Austria-Hungary and in a measure with Germany also. In any case I doubt if the Military party would lightly abandon their traditional policy or consent to an agreement which checked their schemes of the future. At the same time I do not consider that this opposition is insuperable, if they are able to

obtain some substantial *quid pro quo* for concessions which they may be required to make in some localities. I should be entering upon a very large question were I to sketch even in outline the aims of the military party in the Middle East. It is indeed unnecessary for me to do so as they are sufficiently well known in official circles in London; but I should like to draw attention to the fact that an agreement with Great Britain would, to the military mind, practically amount to an abandonment of a large portion of their programme, and perhaps they do not take that wide view of foreign policy which would lead them to appreciate the benefits of peace and good-will. The military party is a powerful one, and its sentiments cannot be ignored, and it is smarting under the misfortunes of the late war. I anticipate that it is in that quarter that serious obstacles to a good understanding with Great Britain will be found. The tone of the press, with the exception of one or two reactionary organs, who are always vituperative of England has, generally speaking, been fairly favourable. But of late, with the exception of criticisms on the Japanese negotiations, the press has occupied itself but little with foreign affairs. The intelligent public—for the masses do not concern themselves with matters beyond their immediate horizon—have been so absorbed in the affairs of their own country, that they have had little leisure or inclination to occupy themselves with foreign affairs except in so far as the latter can be utilized for party purposes. One fact has been borne in upon me during my residence here and that is the absence of any patriotism in the general public. Indeed, I have been told, and I can well believe it, that many welcomed the disasters which fell upon Russia as affording occasions for attacks upon the Government. Moreover, there seems to be an increasing tendency among the rising generation of intellectuals to discard the sense of any love for their country, as being but a narrow selfish ideal, and that for the future the great idea of humanity should alone animate their minds and contain their aspirations.

19. I am afraid that I have given but an imperfect and superficial survey of the foreign relations of Russia, but I would plead as an excuse that this country is passing through a period of transition, that its future is uncertain, and that it is impossible to estimate what forces are working within her or to predict in what direction they may impel this vast Empire, with all its heterogeneous elements, its conflicting interests, and with its great inarticulate mass of many millions half civilized, wholly uneducated but with a hidden strength which may work for great evil or for great good. . . .

(3.)—*The Court.*(²)

47. *The Emperor.*—At a Court where the autocratic power still exists the personality of the reigning sovereign is naturally of high importance and the character of the Emperor who rules over this Empire is of great interest. It is a subject on which I am diffident in expressing an opinion; as to estimate fairly and honestly the character of any individual, in whatever station of life he may be, a close personal acquaintance is necessary. In the present circumstances, I must limit myself to a few general observations. I have not heard the slightest doubt expressed as to the honesty, the high sense of duty and devotion to his country which animate the Emperor in the discharge of his important functions. I do not imagine that any impartial man of whatever shade of politics could deny to His Majesty the possession of qualities which are admirable and exemplary. It would be affectation to assert that the Emperor is not exposed to criticism, and that he is universally regarded as a beneficent and capable monarch. There are many who consider that His Majesty is too much wedded to the autocratic power; there are others who think that the strength of his will is not commensurate with the sincerity of his intentions; and there are others who lament that passing and incidental influences carry too much weight when important decisions have to be taken.

(²) [Section (2) of this report deals with British claims on Russia in connection with the Russo-Japanese war. It is printed above pp. 60-4, No. 56.]

48. Whatever grounds there may be for any of the above strictures, the exceptionally difficult situation in which the Emperor is placed should be taken into consideration. It would require remarkable prescience to discern to what degree the reins of government should be slackened, and exceptional powers of judgment to select the right course to follow among the many divers paths which are recommended. I can conceive no position at the present time which is exposed to such great dangers and which is surrounded with such serious embarrassments as that which is held by the Emperor of Russia. He is the heir to a system of government of many years standing, and to a belief in the sacredness of his functions and duties, and if the necessities of the time demand that he should abandon traditional principles and divest himself in great measure of an authority which has been transmitted to him, the motives and sentiments which govern ordinary human nature may be allowed to justify somewhat any hesitation or doubt which he may feel. I think that it would be just to exercise some leniency in judging the manner in which His Majesty bears the almost superhuman task which is imposed upon him, and if in the eyes of many he does not rise fully to the exigencies of the present situation, and does not always act with the required firmness and decision, nor take a bold initiative indifferent to the opposing currents of so many different waves of opinion, it is doubtful if many of his critics would, if placed in similar circumstances, be able to meet and overcome successfully the difficulties which beset the Throne, and at the same time be capable of endowing the country with the liberty, order, and tranquillity which it so urgently needs. . . .

(4.)—*Important Members of the Cabinet.*

51. M. Stolypin is the President of the Council of Ministers, and at the same time Minister of the Interior, which latter post he held under the Ministry of M. Goremykine. . . . He takes an indifferent interest in foreign affairs, but I should class him among the Cabinet Ministers who would be favourable to a friendly understanding with Great Britain.

52. M. Isvolsky, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is a man of about 50 years of age, but looks younger than his years, and is particularly careful in his dress and appearance. He has charming manners, though I think he has a quick temper, and is always amiable and courteous. He is not without vanity and ambitions; nervous, somewhat timorous of responsibility, and most susceptible to criticism. He is quick and intelligent, and though unused to hard work, he loyally endeavours to master the subjects with which he has to deal. He is very liberal in his views, and is probably the most advanced in the Cabinet in his political opinions. He has lived for thirty years in various diplomatic posts—Copenhagen being the last one—and he is therefore considered by those of his colleagues who are hardened bureaucrats as a Western European with very little knowledge of Russia. His amiable sociable qualities render him very popular at the Court and in society, but I should doubt if his opinions carry much weight with them. His means are slender, and both he and his charming wife would, for many reasons, prefer a comfortable well-paid Embassy to the drudgery and responsibility of a Cabinet Minister, with a comparatively inadequate salary. He is a "dilettante" in art and literature, and of a wide and liberal education. He undoubtedly desires that his tenure of the portfolio of Minister for Foreign Affairs should be a successful one, and is much harassed and perplexed by any obstacles which may arise in the course of any negotiation in which he may be engaged. He is loyally and sincerely anxious for an understanding with Great Britain, though he would take no step which would be unfavourably viewed at Berlin, and the opinions which may prevail at that Court have a paramount importance in his eyes.

53. M. Kokovtsoff is the Minister of Finance, and a man of some 50 years of age. . . . He is, I understand, willing that an understanding with Great Britain should be arranged, and that co-operation in regard to Persian affairs between Great Britain and Russia should be maintained. . . .

56. General Rödiger, the Minister of War—a man of about 60 years of age—is considered to be an admirable man of business, and to be well versed in all office details. Since the separation of the General Staff from the War Office his sphere of action has become more restricted; and, although his duties are multifarious, he does not perhaps occupy so influential a position as the Head of the General Staff. He is a man, I am told, of retired habits, and is almost entirely occupied by office work. He is not likely to be a keen advocate of an understanding with Great Britain.

57. General Palitzin, Head of the General Staff, is not, properly speaking, a Cabinet Minister, but frequently attends its sittings, and always accompanies the Minister of War when the latter has an audience of the Emperor. He is a man of about 45 years of age, and was formerly Chief of the Staff to the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaievitch when the latter was Inspector-General of Cavalry. He is in close intimacy with his former chief, and consequently has a good position at Court. He is more versatile and active than the Minister of War, and his opinions, I understand, carry more weight than those of General Rödiger. He would not subscribe to an understanding with Great Britain unless Russia were to secure greater advantages; and I regard him as one of the chief obstacles to an arrangement. He would probably be supported by the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaievitch in any representations he might make to the Emperor, and he is consequently an important factor to be considered. I do not know him as yet personally. . . .

(6.)—*Memorandum on the Military Policy and Armament of Russia, 1906.*⁽³⁾

70. During the war with Japan, from its commencement to the end of November 1905, about 20,000 officers, 1,270,000 men, and 1,600 guns were transported to the seat of war.

71. At the time of the signing of the Portsmouth Convention in September 1905, there were at the theatre of war about 1,050,000 men, of which 12,000 officers and 987,000 men belonged to the field army; about 40 per cent. of the total numbers were reservists. Besides the above, there were 1,048 officers and 57,320 men of the army prisoners in Japan; these were transported to Russian territory by February 1906. The numbers that had to be transported back to Russia amounted to about 900,000 officers and men.

72. The demobilization was carried out in the following way: By the middle of December 1905 the cadres, amounting to 600 officers and 10,000 men, which were necessary for the instruction of the incoming batch of recruits, were transported to their respective quarters in Russia.

73. Then followed the 13th Corps, which was on its way out when the Portsmouth Treaty was signed. It was, however, detained *en route* to suppress disorders. Then followed the Siberian reserve troops, who demobilized in Siberia and then formed a railway guard with their peace establishment.

74. After that came the reservists of the various army corps, who were sent back *en bloc* by General Linevitch, instead of going with their units. The result of this error was that the reservists got completely out of hand, came under the influence of the revolutionists, and for nearly six weeks interrupted the traffic and took charge of the railway. Order was not restored until troops had been sent from both ends of the line in January to quell the mutineers. Various repairs were then necessary, and the line was not in working order until March. By the end of July the European corps had been brought back mostly by rail, 100,000 men returning by sea.

75. These troops have returned to their former stations in Russia, leaving behind in Siberia and Manchuria a garrison of 170 battalions of infantry, 46 squadrons, 72 batteries, and technical troops. Of these, 2 infantry divisions (32 battalions) and 3 Cossack cavalry regiments are still at Kharbin. The horses—over 270,000—most of which were brought from Russia, were either sold or given away to Cossack Voiskos,

⁽³⁾ [The memorandum on the Naval Policy of Russia is omitted as very little had been done to rebuild the Fleet after the catastrophe of the war.]

but there still remains in Siberia a large quantity of arms, ammunition, stores, and transport carts.

76. The fact that there has been no radical change in the distribution of troops in Russia shows that her military policy, by which one-half of the total active army is massed on or near the western frontier remains unaltered, while the comparatively small garrison retained in Siberia gives evidence of no aggressive intentions with regard to Japan.

77. The situation in Central Asia remains unaltered. The discipline amongst the troops still appears to be far from satisfactory. The country has suffered lately from a frequent change of Rulers. In the autumn of last year the Governor-General of Turkestan, General Teviashev, died. He was a weak Governor, and left the country in a very bad state. The energetic rule of his assistant and temporary successor, General Sakharov, greatly improved matters. Then came General Subbotich, and his rule has been disastrous; he was recalled during the autumn, and has now been dismissed from the army. The Governor of Trans-Caspia, General Ussakovsky, was recalled last year in disgrace for sympathizing with the revolutionists, and was succeeded by General Kossagovsky, of whom great things were expected. But he apparently quarrelled with the Governor-General, resigned his post and left the army. General Matsievsky, Commander of the Ist Turkestan Army Corps, is now Acting Governor, no successor to General Subbotich having yet been appointed.

78. As regards the Caucasus, one European infantry division that was sent from Kiev last year to quell disturbances in the Caucasus still remains in the country, and is distributed about Poti, Kutais, and Batoum, a proof that affairs in that region are not yet normal.

79. Plans for the construction of railways are important evidence as to future military policy. In this respect the most urgent need of the moment, consequent on the loss of Manchuria, is a line from Stretensk to Khabarovsk, north of the Amur River. Next to that in importance comes the doubling of the existing track of the Siberian Railway. Both these measures have been approved in principle. Surveys will commence as soon as possible on the former scheme and as regards the latter, it was decided last July in the Council of Ministers to commence with a double line from Atchinsk to Lake Baikal, and from thence to Manchuria, the frontier station of the Manchurian Railway.

80. In Central Asia there are projects for a railway from Tashkend to Tomsk, and from Uralsk to Semipalatinsk, but the Russian Government wishes to make use of foreign capital to construct them, so they are not considered so urgent as the former Siberian schemes. They are, however, also of strategical significance, as the Tashkend-Tomsk line would draw closer the Central Asian and Far Eastern theatres of war, while the Uralsk-Semipalatinsk-Tomsk line gives another route from Russia to Siberia along the portion where it is not yet proposed to double-track the Siberian Railway. With regard to the projected line from Samarkand to Termez, threatening Kabul, it is rumoured that the Russian Government has postponed its construction.

81. Concerning armaments, Russia is still far from having completed the rearmament of the Field Artillery with the 1902 pattern of 3-inch field guns. The war with Japan and the industrial strikes in Russia have greatly retarded progress. It is believed that in September last, six army corps in Russia were still armed with the old 1878 gun. The Guard Corps and some of the schools have received the 1902 gun, but the remaining army corps and line Rifle Brigades have 1900 pattern, many of which are worn out. There are twenty-six batteries of mountain artillery furnished with the new gun. As to siege guns, since the war with Japan, the Russian authorities have come to the conclusion that all their siege artillery must be replaced. Nothing has yet been accomplished in this direction beyond laying down details of the guns required, and inviting samples from the principal foreign firms for competition.

82. One result of the war has been a very great extension in the use of machine-guns of the Maxim type. At the commencement of the war there were only eight companies of eight guns each, now they number 118 companies draught and pack.

83. Land fortresses are armed with 8-inch guns and mortars, and 2·24-inch Q.-F. guns. For coast defence there are 11-inch and 9-inch mortars, 11-inch, 10-inch, 9-inch, 6-inch Q.-F., and 2·24 Q.-F. guns.

84. The annual contingent of the troops for 1906 has been fixed at 469,618 men. The number for 1903 before the war was 320,732. During the war the figures naturally rose—in 1904 to 447,000, and in 1905 to 475,000. The reason for the present large number is the recent alteration in the terms of military service under which Infantry and Field Artillery will serve for three years instead of four, and the other branches four years instead of five. This measure has been generally popular, and the Government has experienced no difficulty in collecting recruits.

85. The army has, undoubtedly, benefited in many ways from the experiences gained from the war, and also from the attacks of the revolutionists. The artillery, although at present lacking in field guns, and, doubtless, also in stores of ammunition, possesses an excellent type of modern Q.-F. field gun. There are twenty-six mountain batteries, also of a new type of gun the details of which are not known, whereas, before the war there were only two mountain batteries of an old type. There are about 118 machine-gun companies as against eight companies before the war. The infantry has improved in the matter of tactical training, uniform, and equipment, and is devoting greater attention to rifle shooting. A better system of mobilization has been instituted by dividing the reservists into two classes according to age.

86. In order to counteract the efforts of the revolutionists to sow discontent and mutiny among the rank and file, the pay of the soldier was largely increased at the end of last year, and he was given extra permanent issues of bedding, clothing, and rations.

87. The war clearly showed up the weak spots in the organization of the huge fabric of the Russian army, namely, the deficiency both in quantity and quality of the reserve of officers and of good, intelligent, and mature, non-commissioned officers. Efforts are being made towards improvement in both these directions, though progress must, of necessity, be very difficult and a matter of years. . . .

(9.)—Finance.

131. The year 1906 has been one of financial embarrassment, as a result of the late war. When the Budget was issued (January 1906) it was estimated that a loan of £50,000,000 would be required to cover the expenditure of the year, including the final disbursements connected with the war. It was recognized that this estimate must be increased by—

- (a.) A deficit of £16,500,000, shown by the accounts for 1905.
- (b.) £14,000,000, expenditure incurred in 1906, and not provided by the 1906 Budget, of which £8,000,000 were additional funds required for famine relief, and £6,000,000 were for objects connected with the internal disturbances, such as compensation to land owners and manufacturers, extraordinary police measures, &c.
- (c.) £15,000,000, the amount of short-term Treasury Bonds negotiated in Germany in 1905, and repayable in 1906.

The deficiency to be faced during the year was thus brought to a total of £95,500,000 = £50,000,000 + £16,500,000 + £14,000,000 + £15,000,000.

132. It has been met in part as follows:—

The "International" 5 per Cent. Loan of 1906, of a nominal amount of £88,000,000, yielded £70,200,000, and a fresh issue of 4 per Cent. Rentes of a nominal amount of £5,000,000, yielded £3,500,000. Credits allowed in the 1906 Budget for the war and other departments were reduced by £2,000,000. Finally, the Government receipts for the first eight months of the year exceeded the estimates

by £12,600,000. The deficiency is thus reduced to £95,500,000 - £88,300,000 = £7,200,000. If we suppose the receipts for the last four months of the year to exceed the estimates in the same proportion as the receipts for the months January—August, the deficiency will further be reduced to about £3,000,000.

133. The German short-term loan, which was partially renewed when it first fell due in the summer will, it is announced, have been entirely paid off by the close of the year (Russian style). So also the French short-term loan of £10,000,000, and other short-term loans to which no reference has been made in the above statement of liabilities to be met in 1906, because they were contracted and repayable in the course of the year.

134. Thus the Imperial Treasury will have succeeded in tiding over the year with a comparatively inconsiderable deficit, and without resorting to a second foreign loan, as it had been freely predicted that they must. The net amount obtained by loan, exclusive of short-term loans contracted and paid off during the year, was £73,700,000; but the expenditure of the year included such exceptional items as over £50,000,000 in connection with the war, the repayment of £15,000,000 borrowed the previous year in Germany, a deficit of nearly £17,000,000 inherited from 1905, £13,000,000 spent on famine relief, including £5,000,000 assigned for the purpose in the Budget, and £8,000,000 subsequently provided, &c.; the exceptional expenses were thus largely in excess of the net amount borrowed. It could not, however, be inferred that Russia will be able to pay her way next year without a loan; for extraordinary expenses will be required if she proceeds to rebuild her fleet, re-equip her army, or realize the various reforms introduced or in contemplation. It is also certain that a large sum will be required again next year for famine relief, and probably there will still be the necessity for extraordinary police measures entailing increased expenditure by the Ministry of the Interior. Until the Budget for 1907 is issued it will not be known how far the Government rely on economies and fresh taxation to enable them to cope with these unusual demands on the Treasury. As regards the country's present borrowing capacity, it may be noted that the present interest on the public debt, including a small amount assigned for amortization, has now reached approximately £40,000,000, or roughly one-fourth of the total ordinary revenue—if in estimating the revenue we do not take the gross yield of the two great State industrial enterprises, the spirit monopoly and the railways, but of the net yield after making the necessary deductions for working expenses.

135. The monetary situation has greatly improved since the close of last year, when it had become critical. On the 21st December, 1906, the State Bank possessed, according to the official returns, at home and abroad, gold to the value of £124,400,000 as against £104,700,000 on the same date in 1905; and the value of the bank notes in circulation was £126,200,000 as against £136,900,000 twelve months previously.

136. Thus the stock of gold has increased by £19,700,000, and the note circulation has diminished by £10,700,000, and the danger which at one time appeared to threaten the stability of the gold currency has for the present been dispelled.

No. 244.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, January 2, 1907.

I trust that the Neva climate is not commencing to exercise an effect upon me, but I confess to some misgivings as to our negotiations. In the first place, I was

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

not quite satisfied with M. Iswolsky's attitude during our conversation in regard to the Chumbi valley occupation; and though I still feel confident that he is at heart sincere, I am afraid that he is beginning to feel the influence of the military party. His *Pro memoria*, to my mind, was perfectly clear in so far as it simply requested a formal reassertion in the future Convention of the provisional character of our occupation. He is now desirous that we should admit that the provisions of the Convention should be revised, if our occupation were, for some reason or another, prolonged. From his point of view, I do not take much exception to this proposal: but what I did not like was a hint which he threw out that possibly we might indirectly instigate incidents in order to justify a prolonged occupation. This insinuation emanated, I feel pretty sure, from the General Staff, as it is not worthy of M. Iswolsky himself. Again, he spoke throughout our conversation, as if our interests in Thibet were no more than those of Russia. I must go into this question fully with him, and make our views very clear to him, and I shall be glad when I am in a position to hand him our revised Article II, as it will give me an opportunity of discussing the whole question of our relations with Thibet.

In the second place, I am a little disturbed at his eagerness to withdraw our joint offer of an advance to the Persian Gov[ernment]. The withdrawal may be desirable on account of local considerations; but it was only quite recently that M. Iswolsky was ready to make the advance independently of the wishes of the Persian Assembly; and he has now suddenly developed an anxious solicitude for the opinions of that Assembly. This in itself does not disquiet me, as fuller information from Tehran as to the strength of the popular movement may very properly cause him to change his opinion. But the method which he has adopted of communicating in writing the draft of a note and requesting an immediate reply is not in accordance with his usual mode of procedure.

Until recently he has always been emphatic on the virtues of our joint action in the question of the advance, as being of such admirable augury for a general arrangement, and as being a course which we should steadily maintain and develop. He is now ready to abandon it, and at a moment when Spring-Rice reports that he notices at Tehran a weaker desire for joint action than formerly. When I receive your instructions, and communicate them to him I shall be able to see more clearly into the workings of his mind on the subject; but I have some fears that if we unlink our arms on this question, we may find difficulty in hooking him on again. I shall not, of course, give him the slightest indication that I have any doubts or misgivings; but I must tell you that I have.

It seems to me that he is possibly affected by an impression which is gaining ground in St. Petersburg—wrongly I venture to think—that the Government have surmounted all their internal difficulties, and are able to take a higher line in our discussions. Again the Japanese negotiations in which Russia must perforce play a secondary part may incline him to be a little stiffer and less disposed to concessions in other matters: and he may be disappointed that we declined to intervene with Japan, and, if I may say so, we were quite right in refusing. Moreover the General Staff may have been somewhat peremptory with him, and pointed out that he should keep his hands perfectly free. I trust that subsequent conversations with him will remove my doubts; and I quite admit that it was not to be expected that our negotiations would run perfectly smoothly.

I do not believe in an understanding with Germany—made behind our backs. On the ground of prudence alone, M. Iswolsky would not be so foolish as to enter into any compact of that nature. We should inevitably discover it, sooner or later, and he would be quite unable to justify himself. It may be possible that some recent action of Germany may cause him to be less assured of her benevolent indifference to our negotiations than he was formerly; and that he may feel it wiser to proceed with caution; but the fear of offending Germany which does exercise much influence on all his actions would hardly be so effective as to lead him

to give her a wide opening in Persia. He would but poorly serve the interests of his own countrymen were he to do so: unless he were negotiating a big bargain with her over a wider field where he could obtain some substantial quid pro quo.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

No. 245.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/319.

(No. 28.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 13, 1907.

R. January 21, 1907.

The French Ambassador, M. Bompard, who has just returned from a short holiday from Paris, told me today that he had been surprised to hear at the Quai d'Orsay that the Russian Ambassador at Rome had informed M. Barrère that M. Isvolsky had returned from his visit to Berlin in the autumn much discouraged, as he had been given to understand that Russia must choose between Germany and Great Britain, and that she must not expect to be able to come to an understanding with the latter Power and retain at the same time the friendship of the former.

M. Bompard had told his Government that the above version of the results of M. Isvolsky's visit was absolutely in contradiction with what he had gathered in St. Petersburg, and that, on the contrary, M. Isvolsky had not been able to conceal his satisfaction at the benevolent views expressed by the German Government in regard to an understanding between Great Britain and Russia. He asked me whether I had any reason to differ from that view. I told M. Bompard that it passed my comprehension to understand from what source M. Muravieff had derived his information, as there was no doubt whatever that M. Isvolsky was entirely satisfied with the results of his Berlin visit, and that the views of the German Government in regard to an Anglo-Russian understanding had been on two occasions communicated to me by M. von Schoen here, and also openly stated by Prince Bülow in the Reichstag. There was no ambiguity or misunderstanding possible; and M. Isvolsky was quite justified in stating to me, as he had done, that he could now proceed with a light heart in our negotiations, as he anticipated no difficulties or objections on the part of the German Government.

M. Bompard said that he believed that M. Muravieff had repeated the same story to Sir E. Egerton; and I find that this was the case (see Sir E. Egerton's No. 199 of November 3, 1906).⁽¹⁾

I said that though I did not believe that M. Isvolsky had in any way tied his hands in Berlin, I felt sure that he *always* kept an eye fixed on that quarter, and was attentive to any sign which might be given him from the banks of the Spree. M. Bompard said that this regard for German susceptibilities might be inconvenient both to France and Great Britain. I replied that such might be the case, but it was a fact with which we must reckon.

M. Bompard said that he had told M. Paul Cambon that, in his opinion, some little more stimulus should be given to our negotiations, as unless the Russians were spurred on they were inclined to be very lethargic. He did not wish to be indiscreet or ask for details but he feared our negotiations were unduly dragging. I told him that progress was certainly not rapid, but that some had been made, and we had exchanged views on some questions in a practical form. I hoped that matters would soon move a little more quickly, but it was of no use to try to hasten the Russians,

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It describes the above account given by M. Muraviev of M. Isvolski's visit to Berlin. The date is, in fact, November 13, 1906.]

and M. Isvolsky was constantly pleading for time to overcome opposition. Moreover, my Government had several different and widely separated authorities to consult: and all this caused some unavoidable delay.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 246.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/382.

(No. 41.) Most Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. January 19, 1907.

Sir,

R. February 4, 1907.

The Japanese Minister called on me yesterday afternoon, and, in the course of conversation, enquired of me whether my negotiations with M. Isvolsky were making any marked progress. I gave M. Motono in confidence a general outline of the position of affairs, and I added that, although it was possible that an agreement on the main points might eventually be reached, I feared that M. Isvolsky might hesitate to give the final touch to the Convention if he had not, in the meantime, succeeded in satisfactorily concluding his discussions with the Japanese Government.

M. Motono observed that he did not understand why the Russian negotiations with Great Britain should be in any way affected by those passing between Russia and Japan. I told him that I was similarly perplexed, but so far as I could gather, the views of M. Isvolsky were as follows. He was, I understood, apprehensive that the Japanese Government would insist on certain demands to which Russia would have eventually to submit, and that consequently he would have to present to the public a Commercial Treaty and a Fisheries Convention which would not be considered satisfactory. At the same time he would have signed an Agreement with Great Britain, the Ally of Japan, which would in the eyes of many place a distinct check on Russian policy in the Middle East: and, therefore, criticism would be severe on a policy which turned to the disadvantage of Russia both in the Far East and in Central Asia. It was not, I said, difficult to combat these fears and apprehensions, but I wished to place before him what I thought was at the back of the mind of M. Isvolsky.

M. Motono remarked that it seemed to him that M. Isvolsky was unnecessarily alarmed, and was conjuring up difficulties and dangers which did not in reality exist. So far as the Japanese negotiations were concerned, he repeated to me what he had said on former occasions to the effect that Japan was presenting no demands on which an understanding could not be effected, and that he was unable to comprehend why an agitation in the public press had been fomented. M. Motono entered into considerable detail on this point with the object of explaining to me that the Japanese Government were simply requesting the due fulfilment of the provisions of the Treaty of Portsmouth⁽¹⁾

M. Motono said that he was very grateful to me for having spoken to him so fully, and that I could trust him to consider what I had said as strictly personal and confidential. He could assure me that his Government desired nothing better than to be on amicable relations with Russia and to see peace maintained in the Far East. Without betraying the confidence I had placed in him he would take an opportunity of leading M. Isvolsky on to the ground which I had indicated: and if he made any proposals of the nature which I had sketched he would be happy to communicate them

⁽¹⁾ [The omitted passages give details on this subject.]

to his Government. It would, he thought, be an admirable consummation if Great Britain and Japan could establish such relations with Russia as would make for peace in Central Asia as well as in the Middle and the Far East.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Sir A. Nicolson was on delicate ground but he walked carefully.

E. G.

No. 247.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/382.

(No. 42.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 19, 1907.

R. February 4, 1907.

During the course of my conversation with the Japanese Minister yesterday, he asked me if I thought that M. Isvolsky kept the German Ambassador fully informed of the negotiations which were passing between Russia and Great Britain and Japan. I replied that, as far as my discussions were concerned, I doubted if M. Isvolsky acquainted M. von Schoen with any details; in fact he had assured me that he had communicated them to no one. The relations between M. Isvolsky and M. von Schoen were intimate and of some standing and it was possible that when he was in difficulties he might confide in an old friend. I asked M. Motono if his question implied that he had doubts as to Germany viewing with satisfaction friendly arrangements between Russia and our own countries.

M. Motono said that the German Government were at present profuse in amiabilities towards Japan, but it was perfectly clear to him that it would not be in the interests of the German policy to see Russia, Japan and Great Britain come to arrangements which would preclude all danger of friction between them, and he doubted if Germany would willingly witness a friendly understanding between the three countries. He believed that M. Isvolsky was much under the influence of Berlin, and he feared that trouble might arise from that quarter.

I told M. Motono that I was well aware that M. Isvolsky was very solicitous in his care for German susceptibilities, but that in regard to an understanding between Russia and Great Britain, the German Government had announced that they regarded it with benevolence. At the same time I did not deny that a similar charitable disposition had been shown by the German Government in the early days of the Anglo-French agreement, and that subsequently a change of attitude had ensued.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 248.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 50.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 25, 1907.

R. February 4, 1907.

M. Isvolsky recurred today to a suggestion which he had previously made to me that he, Count Benckendorff and myself should have some conversations in regard to the several questions on which we were treating. I had told His Excellency that I should always be at his disposal and that I considered that it would be of advantage, if we could discuss matters in the presence of Count Benckendorff. I think that the

latter, who is cordially in favour of an agreement being reached, may stimulate M. Isvolsky to push on matters a little and may also be of use in moderating in military and other circles any opposition which may exist.

M. Isvolsky then said that a small Commission was about to meet to discuss several of the points connected with our negotiations, and that Count Benckendorff would attend the sittings. He, therefore, would suggest that our conversations *à trois* should be postponed until the Commission had concluded its labours, as he would then be in a better position to discuss matters.

I am glad that a Commission is to examine the questions under discussion, as it shows that M. Isvolsky is now resolved to take up the subject of the negotiations seriously and without procrastination. Moreover, as presumably some delegates from the General Staff will be on the Commission, it will be possible to ascertain with some precision the views of the military party.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

[ED. NOTE.—The following appears to be the decisions of an early meeting of the Committee here alluded to :—

(548) *Protocol of Deliberations of the Russian Ministerial Council of February 1, 1907. on the Project of a Treaty with England on Persian affairs.*⁽¹⁾

At the opening of the meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs reminded the Council that the question of an understanding with England as to Persian affairs had already been ventilated, although solely *à propos* of a loan to be granted to the Persian Government.

This time it was a matter of coming to a decision as to the proposal of the British Government to divide Persia into spheres of influence. Until quite recently, this idea had met with no approval from Russian public opinion, and in Government circles the conviction even prevailed that Persia must come entirely under Russian influence, and that Russia must press onward to the Persian Gulf, which would necessitate the building of a trans-Persian railway and a fortified terminal station on the shores of the above-mentioned Gulf. The events of the past few years, however, have shown this plan to be impossible of realization and that everything must be avoided that might lead to a conflict with England. The best means for achieving this purpose is the demarcation of the spheres of influence in Persia.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed himself as being a convinced adherent of this standpoint, and desired to learn the opinion of the Ministers present as to the expediency of such a policy, before the meeting entered upon the discussion of the proposals made by England.

The Ministerial Council accepted the principle of spheres of influence as the only basis possible for an agreement with England, whereupon the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out the close connection existing between this question and the Bagdad Railway. Only a treaty with England could lead to the expected results, if no objections were raised against the Treaty on the part of Germany. *As events in Morocco have shown, Germany distrusts all agreements concluded without her knowledge and which might in any manner affect her position as a world Power.* There is all the more reason for such anxiety on our part, since Germany has already turned her attention to Persia and apparently intends creating important interests for herself there. This is furthermore confirmed by the fact that the possibility of a Treaty between Russia and England has aroused lively perturbation in Germany. This however has been disposed of by the statements of the Russian Government at Berlin. *We gave them to understand that Russia would take upon herself no obligations without having previously come to an understanding with Germany, should the proposed agreement affect German interests in any way.* But to be completely secure, it would be necessary to come to a definite understanding with our Western neighbour and to circumscribe, to a certain degree, our mutual interests. *Such a basis of negotiations is presented by the Bagdad Railway which Russia has hitherto attempted to prevent by all possible means, relying on the support of France and England.* The Ministerial Council must now decide whether it be to Russia's advantage to renounce such a policy.

The Minister of Finance pointed out that the rumours of Germany's extensive economic designs on Persia were greatly exaggerated. According to his information, the German banks, which especially finance German enterprises in Asia, are so extremely occupied that they are hardly able to take part in new undertakings in Persia, all the more so as the continuous disturbances in Iran hardly create sound conditions for trade and commerce. True, several leading German banks have formed a new institution, "*Die Orientalische Bank*," and intend opening a branch at Teheran, but, so far as is known, the activity of this institution in Persia

⁽¹⁾ [Siebert, pp. 475-80. Unless otherwise stated notes, punctuation, italics, &c., are as in original.]

is to be more of an informative nature, to determine which Persian markets might in the future be of use to Germany. Nevertheless, the fact of German interests in Persia cannot be denied and the understanding with Germany, referred to by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is therefore decidedly desirable.

Referring to the Bagdad Railway, Kokowtzeff† reiterated that all his former objections to this railway still held good. Although it is an important line of transit between Western Europe and India, and would partly replace Ocean Traffic, yet it avoids our territory and consequently does not permit us to participate in the advantages of this transit. The Bagdad Railway will also undoubtedly increase the productiveness of the territories of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia through which it passes, and thus create new competition for the Russian wheat export trade. Especial danger for our predominance in Northern Persia is embodied in the branch lines leading towards the Persian frontier, which will make access to our economic sphere of influence possible for German and English industrial products.

We cannot, however, disguise the fact that we do not possess the power to prevent the construction of the Bagdad Railway or to defer it for any length of time. The only means at our disposal—our influence on France—are not reliable and we would hardly succeed in restraining French capital from participation in this enterprise.

The idea of entering into competition with the Bagdad Railway, by the building of a new line connecting the Russian railways with India by way of Afghanistan, will also have to be given up. England would doubtless regard such a line as far more dangerous than the Bagdad Railway. We shall therefore have to reconcile ourselves to the idea of the Bagdad Railway and endeavour to obtain compensations from Germany. In any case, the Minister does not regard Russia's participation in the Bagdad Railway as desirable. Our financial position does not permit us to take an active part; a fictitious participation, moreover, through a private banking concern or a French group of capitalists, affords us no advantages. The Russian Ambassador at London thereupon remarked, that since England had hitherto always calculated on Russian participation in the internationalising of the Bagdad Railway, our withdrawal might give quite a different aspect to the whole question.

The Minister of Trade believes that Russian obstruction in the Bagdad Railway question would only be of use could the construction of the line be postponed for several decades. As this is impossible, it would be desirable to secure as advantageous compensations as possible in return for our acquiescence.

The Bagdad Railway is so injurious to Russian interests that we can scarcely hope to receive compensations of real importance to us. Hence we must content ourselves with paralyzing as far as possible its harm. In this respect we must differentiate between the main and the branch lines approaching the Persian frontier. For Russian interests, the main line signifies the concentration of the transit service from Europe to the Persian Gulf. Since 1883, when the Caucasus was closed, this transit service has not passed through Russia, so that our losses now would only be indirect. The branch lines mentioned above, however, especially those touching Persian territory, signify a direct menace to us, as they would open the North Persian markets, which we have hitherto controlled, to foreign goods. Hence the following provision in favour of Russia should be established at the pending negotiations with England and Germany:

1. Germany guarantees that no branch lines be built in the direction of the Persian frontier, as, for instance, Khanekin.
2. England and Germany must support us as to the renewal of the obligation of the Persian Government, valid until the year 1910, and providing that Persia would build no railways in the North‡ or that such should be built only with our sanction, consequently also with due regard to our interests.
3. The Treaty of 1900 with Turkey relating to railways in Asia Minor must be extended in our favour.

The representatives of the War Ministry and the General Staff, unanimously confirm the impossibility of reconciling the Bagdad Railway with Russian strategic interests; the advantages which would accrue to Turkey through this railway could only be equalised by a corresponding development of our Caucasian railway system, and corresponding reinforcement of our troops in the frontier districts. We can obtain no compensations of a military nature from other States. Nevertheless, they§ are of opinion that under certain conditions we could give our consent to the Bagdad Railway.(2)]

† President of Ministerial Council—virtually Russian prime minister.

‡ An unusual condition in this age of railroads.

§ The military.

(2) [Siebert-Benckendorff, Vol. I, pp. 1-9, prints the whole protocol, of which pp. 6-9 did not appear in the earlier edition. They describe the discussion of the British proposals.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 58.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 27, 1907.

R. February 4, 1907.

I enquired of Count Benckendorff last evening whether at his last audience he had found the Emperor well disposed towards the conclusion of an understanding between our two countries; and he replied that there was no doubt that His Majesty was sincerely desirous that an arrangement should be reached. Count Benckendorff added that from conversations which he had held with various persons he found that there existed an impression that Great Britain had originated the negotiations immediately after the war, and that there was a feeling that she had, thereby, evinced a desire to take advantage of the difficulties of Russia to exact terms of an onerous character. His Excellency said that he had taken pains to explain that *pourparlers* for an arrangement had commenced long before the outbreak of the war, and that they had naturally to be suspended during the period of hostilities, to be resumed as soon as peace had been concluded. He did not consider that the opposition of the military party would be so strenuous as was feared, and from a conversation which he had had with an important member of the General Staff he trusted that it would not be difficult to remove many misapprehensions.

Count Benckendorff said that it was evident to him that the General Staff had never been informed of the previous discussions and had been under the impression that Great Britain had suddenly sprung the negotiations on the Russian Government when the latter were in troublesome difficulties. They had consequently not reviewed the transaction with much favour.

Count Benckendorff said that he would attend the sittings of the Committee, to which I alluded in my despatch No. 50 of the 25th instant.⁽¹⁾ and I think that his presence will be of utility.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

[Count Benckendorff might also add that after the war the initiative in the resumption of negotiations was taken by the Russian Government.

C. H.

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 250.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 78.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 10, 1907.

R. February 18, 1907.

Count Benckendorff spoke to me last night in regard to the progress of our negotiations, and stated that the General Staff was now ready to accept in principle the fact that an understanding between Great Britain and Russia was desirable, but that they considered that some concessions of a political nature should be made to Russia in return for her projected withdrawal from a "military position." I presume that allusion was here made to Seistan being included in the British zone. Count Benckendorff said that he had been unable to obtain from the General Staff precise information as to what concessions they required, but he dropped an observation on the Dardanelles. I remarked that it would be well if all parties concerned in the negotiations were to state frankly their desires and aspirations, in fact that they should lay their cards on the table. As to the Dardanelles, that was outside the scope of my instructions, and, moreover, other Powers than Russia and Great Britain were interested in the question.

Count Benckendorff further said that he found a very favourable disposition generally to an understanding, and he hoped that it would be established on a broad and permanent basis. I believe that the inter-departmental Committee is to meet in a day or two; and I trust to be shortly in a position to inform you more precisely as to Russian views.

Count Benckendorff alluded also to the Russian negotiations with Japan which had naturally some influence over the course of our discussions. He said that he had explained to M. Isvolsky that it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to intervene in any manner in the negotiations which he was pursuing with M. Motono, but that in respect to his desire to come to some arrangement with Japan which would ensure peace in the Far East, he thought that His Majesty's Government could perhaps afford some service. M. Isvolsky was anxious to insert in a Convention with Japan some joint declaration that both parties engaged to maintain the *status quo* in the Far East, and to abide by the provisions of their Treaty obligations. It might be possible perhaps for His Majesty's Government to associate themselves in some manner in an engagement of that character. I said that I knew that my Government would welcome any mutual agreement between Russia and Japan which would maintain peace in the Far East, but I imagined that the Russian Government would in the first place ascertain the views of the Japanese Government on the subject, which course I understood had not yet been taken.

I think that in regard to the Anglo-Russian negotiations Count Benckendorff is doing very useful work among military and other officials in a sense favourable to a satisfactory issue of the discussions.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

It is not clear at first sight what is the "military position" from which the General Staff are willing that Russia should withdraw in return for political concessions, so it is not possible to judge whether such a withdrawal would be of substantial benefit to us and therefore worth accepting in return for such concessions. It would in any case be difficult for us to prevent Russia reoccupying the position in question at any moment that suited her, after the agreement was concluded. Any proposal emanating from the military party must be looked on with great suspicion.

M. Izvolski's suggestion regarding the association of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] with a Russo-Japanese agreement for the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Far East seems rather premature.

H. N.

Note reference to the Dardanelles question.

R. P. M.

Sir A. Nicolson has a copy of our Memorandum on the Dardanelles question.⁽¹⁾

C. H.

E. G.

(1) [Memorandum of November 16, 1906, v. Ch. XXIII, pp. 58-60, *Ed. note.*]

No. 251.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 95.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 15, 1907.

R. February 26, 1907.

I called on Count Witte today, and endeavoured to induce him to give me his views on internal affairs, but I found him inclined to be most reserved on the question, though he expressed the opinion that the Duma would be in great majority composed of deputies irreconcilably hostile to the Government, and little disposed to assist the latter in the work of the session.

Count Witte was evidently anxious to speak on foreign questions, and he spontaneously dwelt at some length on the situation in France, and made especial reference to the recent discussion in the French Chamber on loans to Russia. He considered that the attacks which had been made not only against Russia but also against the Emperor should have been promptly condemned by the President of the Chamber, who had passed but the slightest censure upon them. He admitted that the language of M. Pichon was perfectly correct and friendly. At the same time he was of opinion that the sympathy in influential circles in Russia with the French alliance had greatly diminished, while on the other hand he was pleased to observe that friendly feelings towards Great Britain were spreading and increasing, and he earnestly hoped that the negotiations which were proceeding between the two Governments would reach a satisfactory conclusion. He trusted that they would not be unduly protracted, as the favourable moment at present existing might slip by, and it was well "to strike when the iron was hot." He spoke in the highest terms of M. Isvolsky, whose appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs he had at the outset viewed with some misgiving and surprise, but now that he was better acquainted with him, and had had an opportunity of watching his work he had been struck with his intelligence, breadth of view, and honesty of purpose. He did not consider that too much heed need be paid to military opposition to an arrangement with Great Britain. Such opposition was to be expected, and was in the nature of things.

Count Witte further stated that he hoped that Monsieur Isvolsky would succeed in establishing a durable understanding with Japan on a broad basis, and if Russia were enabled to live on amicable and undisturbed relations with Great Britain and Japan he thought that M. Isvolsky would have rendered an invaluable service not only to his own country but to the cause of peace.

The foreign policy of Germany, he continued was so erratic, and so impulsive, and so eminently selfish, that Russia should endeavour to make terms with Great Britain and Japan rather than be cajoled by the allurements which might emanate from Berlin.

Count Witte is leading a retired life, but of late he has been frequently visited by one or two of the highest Court officials, and by some members of the Cabinet, M. Isvolsky among others, and it may be that his advice is being sought by those who previously shunned him, and that his undoubted talents and experience are found to be valuable and useful.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 252.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 96.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 16, 1907.

R. February 26, 1907.

The French Ambassador informed me today that he was pleased to find that M. Isvolsky was most satisfied with the outlook of his negotiations both with Great Britain and Japan, and that he had gathered that His Excellency expected to bring both matters to a fairly speedy and successful termination.

M. Bompard said that, as regards the Japanese negotiations, he considered that the Japanese had become more conciliatory owing to the advice which had been given them from Paris. He did not specify what was the nature of the advice, but he evidently was of opinion that the French Government had succeeded in giving, as he termed it, a *bon coup de main* to the negotiations. He had every reason to believe that the Japanese Government would now be willing to come to a comprehensive under-

standing with Russia, and animated with this hope, and a good prospect of coming to terms with Great Britain, M. Isvolsky was, so my French colleague remarked, radiant and sanguine.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 253.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, February 19, 1907.

F.O. 371/382.

D. 12:57 P.M.

Tel. (No. 25.)

R. 2:15 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to call on him yesterday evening.

Count Benckendorff was present. H[is] E[xcellency] told me that he thought that our draft convention as to Thibet could be accepted but he questioned me as to scientific missions and as to Chumbi occupation. I told [him] that I was expecting a draft note as to the former and that I had submitted a draft declaration as to the latter but had not yet received a reply.

He read me portions of draft embodying Russian proposals as to Persia. I shall receive them in writing very shortly. Their line I understand would run as follows:—Kuchan-Ispahan-Yezd-Kasri Sherin.

There were conditions as to maintaining existing concessions in respective zones. I said that these should not include Meshed-Seistan telegraph line and enquired what other concessions were referred to. He mentioned Bank agencies and customs revenues and observed that settlement of two telegraph lines might be made the subject of a separate arrangement. I said that only settlement to my mind was a transfer.

It will be best to await proposals in writing so that I may be sure that I have correctly given line and that I may see all the details as he only read me passages.

He informed me that he had succeeded in winning over military party to accepting in principle our zone which was practically abandoning Seistan to us and was a surrender of what might in certain eventualities be an important strategical position. He said further that Persian question could not be settled until we had come to an arrangement as to Afghanistan and asked me to give him a sketch of our views. I expressed my inability to do so at present but hoped to be in a position shortly to give him some proposals. I asked what Russian views were. He said that military party was anxious lest we should change Afghanistan from a buffer state into a country entirely under our control and obtain Amir's permission to organize his troops, build railways etc. I said we could not prevent the Amir from developing his country and building railways if he wished to do so. I asked if he meant that Russia desired the maintenance of political *status quo*. He replied in the affirmative and added that some arrangement should be made as to relations of local frontier officers and as to trade. I gave him no indication of what we would propose.

Minister for Foreign Affairs at conclusion of interview made important statement that Russia would have to arrange with Germany so that latter power should not seek concessions in Russian zone and that such an arrangement would have to deal with Bagdad Railway—in accord with us I understood. His idea apparently is that Russia should withdraw her obstruction to the Bagdad Railway on condition that Germany gives her free hand in her zone.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is desirous of pushing on negotiations especially as those with Japan are progressing very favourably.

⁽¹⁾ [A long despatch expanding this telegram is printed in the chapter relating to Persia, *infra*, pp. 428-31, No. 388.]

No. 254.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, February 20, 1907.*

F.O. 371/369.

D. 8.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 28.)

R. 10 P.M.

Persian negotiations.

I have received in writing Russian proposed draft Convention. Russian line to run from Kasr-i-Sherin through Ispahan, Yezd, Kokh, to the Afghan frontier near Kuhsan. This is different from line which I telegraphed yesterday, but the misunderstanding is mine. Our line is mentioned as running from Afghan frontier through Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, and Bunder Abbas, and "without that frontiers of Afghanistan and Beluchistan."

I do not quite understand words in inverted commas. Each country reciprocally engages not to seek for herself or to support in favour of her own subjects or of subjects of third Power, any political or commercial Concessions, such as Concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c.

Russia engages not to oppose directly or indirectly Concessions supported by British Government in British zone, and Great Britain undertakes a similar engagement as to Russian zone.

No mention is made of (? maintenance of) existing Concessions, as was stated verbally to me yesterday, but Russian Government may consider this as implied.

Final paragraph states that revenues of all the Persian customs, with the exception of those of Farzistan and of Persian Gulf, guaranteeing the service of the Russian loans are to be devoted to same purpose as heretofore.

Minister for Foreign Affairs stated to me yesterday that the above reserved revenues were affected to British loans, but I presume you will wish that all the revenues affected should be clearly specified in the Convention.

Preamble mentions integrity and independence of Persia, and equal opportunity for industry and commerce to all nations. I will send copy of draft Convention by safe opportunity, I hope, to-morrow.

No. 255.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 114.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. March 1, 1907.

Sir,

R. March 18, 1907.

Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress gave a dinner last night to the Diplomatic Body at Tsarskoe Selo, and I took an opportunity of mentioning to the Emperor that I was pleased to state that my negotiations with M. Isvolsky were making satisfactory progress. His Majesty said that he had been gratified to learn from the weekly reports made to him by M. Isvolsky that a substantial advance had been made towards an agreement on the questions under discussion, and he trusted that the course of the negotiations would continue to proceed smoothly. I said that I had every reason to congratulate myself on having so loyal and sincere a coadjutor as M. Isvolsky and that with his cooperation I hoped that a satisfactory conclusion would be reached before very long. His Majesty smiled and said this must occur.

I report these few remarks as they show, I think, that His Majesty is desirous that our agreement should be concluded and his good will to that end will naturally be a weighty factor with the Russian Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

C[oun]t Benckendorff told me that the Emperor had said to him that the agreement *must* be made.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 256.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 101.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 7, 1907.

Count Benckendorff came to see me to-day on his return from Russia.

He was very pleased with the progress which had been made with our negotiations at St. Petersburg, and I said I was sure his own visit to St. Petersburg had been a most useful one. I felt that his influence in the negotiations had been beneficial.

I then told him that we were sending our reply to the Russian proposal with regard to Persia. I observed that the sphere which they claimed was a very large one, and that it included Tehran. This was a matter of very great importance, as the fact that Tehran was in the Russian sphere was bound to increase Russian prestige there. And yet it was at Tehran, the seat of the central Government, that any influence we might require would have to be exercised, even in connection with concessions or other matters relating to our own sphere only.

Count Benckendorff admitted the point, and said that, owing to the situation of Tehran, he did not see how it could be otherwise than in the Russian sphere.

I said that, of course, I saw the difficulty. But none the less, it was a consideration to be borne in mind. This was not, however, the vital point to which I wished to refer.

I then explained that, in consequence of our obligations to Afghanistan with regard to frontier matters, and to Persia under our Treaty of 1857 with regard to the Perso-Afghan frontier, it was impossible without great complications to place a piece of the Perso-Afghan frontier within the Russian sphere. To do so would also complicate arrangements for direct communication with Afghan officials on local frontier matters. It might be that Customs officials, or doctors, or persons of that kind, would have to be placed by the Russians in their own sphere; and if such persons appeared on the Perso-Afghan frontier, our difficulties would be greatly increased. Therefore, it was vital that the Russian line should start, not from Kuhsan, but from Zulficar, and so avoid bringing any part of the Perso-Afghan frontier into the Russian sphere.

Count Benckendorff did not seem to anticipate that there would be difficulty about this, and appeared relieved that this should be the main point to which I attached capital importance.

I also explained what we should have to propose with regard to Customs officials in our sphere if Russia had to foreclose the security for her loans. With regard to the Meshed-Seistan telegraph-line, I agreed that the transfer might be dealt with in a separate Note, provided it was done simultaneously with the main Agreement.

Count Benckendorff saw no difficulty on either of these points.

He said M. Isvolsky thought it might be necessary to take measures on the northern frontier of Persia to prevent revolutionaries crossing from the Caucasus, but he was determined to keep us informed of anything that was done, and to act in

concert with us. Count Benckendorff spoke most warmly of the co-operation between us, which had existed lately, and of the advantage of continuing it.

I cordially agreed, and observed that co-operation had only been arranged just in time, for had it not been arranged before the recent disturbances in Persia began there would have been trouble. At one time, we might have increased our prestige enormously by becoming the champions of the popular party, and great self-restraint had been necessary on our part to prevent this being thrust upon us. As to interference now, I understood that the Shah might desire foreign help against his own people, but such intervention from outside would be dangerous. To this Count Benckendorff entirely assented.

This part of our conversation ended without the expectation on either side that there would be any difficulty in coming to a settlement on the Persian question.

Count Benckendorff then referred to Afghanistan.

I explained the impossibility of our making any proposals about frontier officials and local communications till we had sounded the Ameer, who would naturally be very suspicious.

Count Benckendorff referred to the Russian apprehension of any change in the status of Afghanistan. The Russians were afraid that an Afghan Army, commanded and trained by British officers, would be a danger. They were, therefore, very anxious that we should undertake some engagement on the subject.

I told him that I could without reserve assure him that we had no intention or desire of penetrating into Afghanistan, or changing its present status. We did not intend to send British officers into Afghanistan, nor had the Ameer asked for any. During his visit to India we had made no political proposals to him, and he had made none to us. The object of the visit, so far as we were concerned, was to prove to the Ameer that we were very good friends to him, but friends who asked nothing from him, and that he had not been asked to India in order that we might make demands upon him.

But I foresaw that it would be very difficult for us to undertake any engagements about Afghanistan. There were very turbulent tribes on our own frontiers, such as the Afridis and Waziris. There would probably be no trouble under the present Ameer, but it was always possible that some Ameer less wise might stir up the frontier tribes within our own borders, and assume an aggressive attitude which would require measures on our part.

Count Benckendorff admitted the force of this, and said perhaps some form of words might be devised by which we should engage not to do anything unless the Ameer took action which rendered measures necessary on our part. But the suggestion was very vague, and I did not think it desirable to pursue the point any further.

Count Benckendorff admitted that the Ameer could not be prevented from taking measures of his own to develop his country. He was aware of our general ideas about Afghanistan on other matters, and seemed sanguine of an agreement.

We then spoke of the Bagdad Railway.

I explained that Count Metternich had complained to others, though not to me, that our attitude towards the Railway was an obstacle to good relations. I therefore intended to say to him that I thought it was not fair to make a grievance of our opposition to the Bagdad Railway, while Germany refrained from making any proposals to us with regard to it.

Count Benckendorff asked me whether we would initiate any proposal, and I said, No. I meant to confine my statement to the point that, if Germany felt the Bagdad Railway to be a political difficulty, it was for her to make a proposal.

Count Benckendorff said that M. Isvolsky's attitude was that he would prefer that the Railway should not be made. But if it was to be made, the situation must be accepted, and the best terms must be made.

I told him I thought the Railway would be made in the long run. If it became a through route from sea to sea, it was obvious that all the Powers, Russia, France, and ourselves, as well as Germany, would be affected by it, and would be concerned in it.

If, therefore, Germany made any proposal, I would say that I thought it should include an arrangement with Russia. But I assumed that the German Government were already aware of M. Isvolsky's views.

Count Benckendorff further said that he hoped we would co-operate in the Balkans. The Russian Government had, after some difficulty, accepted the principle that judicial reform should be worked out through the Financial Commission.

I said we had but one end in view, and that was to promote a better state of things in Macedonia. The situation was becoming difficult here, because the Balkan Committee, who were not chauvinists, but quite the contrary, were pointing out that things in Macedonia were getting no better. I was afraid this was true. We ought, therefore, to work together this year, and try to make things better than last year.

I also said that, to be quite frank, it was our impression that the Civil Agents of Russia and Austria had not, last year, used their influence as they might in improving matters.

Count Benckendorff seemed to be fully aware of this opinion, and he did not demur to it.

I told him that, as soon as the Customs question was settled, I hoped effective reforms would be proposed. We would be very glad to support them.

In the course of this conversation, Count Benckendorff emphasized M. Isvolsky's desire to extend the scope of an agreement with Japan so as to produce something, which might perhaps not amount to an *Entente*, but would at any rate produce "des relations" between Russia and Japan. He hoped we should favour this.

I said we certainly should favour a general good understanding. We could not suggest to Japan that she should make concessions on points connected with the Portsmouth Treaty, but we wished to promote good relations between Russia and Japan. The direct object of a settlement between Russia and ourselves was to secure the Indian frontier; but there was also an indirect object, viz., to be on good terms with Russia, and this indirect object would be lost unless relations between Japan and Russia were satisfactory. We wished, therefore, to see this secured.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 257.

Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/847.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1907.

Count Benckendorff told me to-day that he had no instructions to speak to me on the subject of the Bosphorus, but he wished to point out that the opening of the Straits to Russia would strengthen and ensure a good disposition in that country, and complete the success of the arrangements we were now discussing.

He made it quite clear that, Russia having at present no fleet of her own, would rather that the Straits should remain closed to all Powers than that they should be opened to all Powers. Access to Constantinople might be on the same terms for all, but for Russia it would be essential that the entrance to the Black Sea should not be open to foreign Powers. Unless she could have it open for exit to herself, without its being open for entrance to others, she would rather the question should not be raised at all.

As other Powers were involved in the question, it might be that any arrangement made with us would be platonic only, but its beneficial effect on public opinion would be very great.

⁽¹⁾ [This memorandum was sent to Sir A. Nicolson in the form of a despatch. No. 117 of March 20, 1907.]

I replied that I had felt all through these negotiations that good relations with Russia meant that our old policy of closing the Straits against her, and throwing our weight against her at any conference of the Powers must be abandoned. It was this old policy which, in my opinion, had been the root of the difficulties between the two countries for two generations. And, for us and Russia to settle our difficulties in Asia, and then to find ourselves afterwards in opposition on some other important matter, would be to undo the good which would be done by the present negotiations as to Asiatic frontiers.

I felt, however, that it would be difficult for us to put anything concerning the Straits in the form of an engagement, and it would be necessary for me to speak to the Prime Minister before I could say anything very definite. Even if the present Government were agreed that a settlement of the matter should be made, there was a risk that, when it was known that we had agreed to the Straits being open to Russia and closed to ourselves, there would be a storm in public opinion here. Then the whole Agreement, instead of being carried with general acceptance, might give rise to party feeling.

I wanted, therefore, to have a little time to consider the question.

Count Benckendorff asked whether he should say anything to M. Isvolsky at once.

I said that, if M. Isvolsky was expecting something on the subject, I should not like him to infer from silence that the mention of it had been unfavourably received. But if he had not instructed Count Benckendorff to mention the matter, and was not expecting anything, it would perhaps be better to wait for a few days.

E. G.

No. 258.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/347.

(No. 120.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 19, 1907.

In conversation with Count Benckendorff to-day I referred to the question of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, which he had mentioned to me last week.

He had told me his personal view was that Russia would rather that the Straits should remain closed altogether than that they should be opened in such a way as to allow other Powers than Russia access to the Black Sea. If any change was to be made, the entrance to the Black Sea should remain closed to other Powers, while Russia should have the right to make arrangements with Turkey for the passage of her own ships. Subject to this provision, the Dardanelles and the rest of the Straits as far as the entrance to the Black Sea might be available for other Powers on the same terms for all.

Count Benckendorff made it clear that this was only his personal view of the form which an arrangement might take.

I told him I had always felt that this question of the Straits had been at the root of the difficulties between England and Russia for the last generation and more, and that, if permanent good relations were to be established between the two Countries, which was what we desired, England must no longer make it a settled object of her policy to maintain the existing arrangement with regard to the passage of the Dardanelles. For if we were now to come to a friendly arrangement about Asiatic questions, and if a few years hence the question of the Straits and the entrance to the Black Sea was to be raised in Europe, and we were again to find ourselves in opposition to Russia upon it all the good secured by an Asiatic Agreement would be undone.

This was the view of H[is] M[ajesty's] Government. At the same time, however, I should like the Russian Government to consider two or three points as to the expediency of asking for a definite engagement on our part in connection with the present negotiations.

It might be that some important sections of public opinion would be very critical of a particular engagement on this question. I had no doubt the House of Commons would accept whatever we proposed, but it would be better to propose something which secured general acceptance than to make a proposal which would cause party feeling though commanding a majority.

In the next place, if we made an engagement which people here would consider a great concession to Russia, they might expect that kindred questions, such as the Capitulations in Egypt and the Bagdad Railway, which related to the same regions, should be the subject of reciprocal engagements at the same time.

In the third place, there were the other Powers in Europe to be considered. Count Metternich had lately made some comment to me on the Russian negotiations, and I had dismissed the matter by telling him that our negotiations related to the Indian Frontier, and did not, therefore, concern Germany, and were in no way directed against her. If our Agreement was to include an Article about the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, it would be necessary to tell Germany beforehand that the original scope of the negotiations had been widened; otherwise I should be open to a charge of having mislead [*sic*] the German Ambassador intentionally.

I had not mentioned the matter to the French Government. I concluded that the Russian Government would do that if they proceeded further. We wished to continue in agreement with the French. The negotiations on their present lines, confined to Asiatic questions would not arouse the susceptibilities of any other Powers. If they resulted in a pledge as to a particular settlement of the question of the Straits, other Powers might be provoked to say that we had attempted to settle the question behind their backs and they might take offence.

I wished M. Isvolsky to take these points into consideration. But, in view of what I had said as to our general policy, I wished it to be understood that the question was one which we were prepared to discuss. If, however, the Russian Government desired a discussion now, it would be for them to take the initiative; for the present I understood that Count Benckendorff had spoken from his personal point of view only.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 259.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/347.

(No. 154.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 25, 1907.

R. April 2, 1907.

At my interview to-day with M. Isvolsky, His Excellency said that M. Poklewski had just arrived from London, and had brought with him a communication of the highest importance. M. Isvolsky read to me the document which was a transcript of your despatch No. 120 of the 19th instant,⁽¹⁾ and which related to the conversation which you had held with Count Benckendorff in regard to the question of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.

M. Isvolsky said that the conversation constituted to his mind a great evolution in the relations of the two countries, and that though the matter was one which would have to be most carefully considered from all points of view, especially as to the method and moment of advancing further in the question, still he was highly gratified with the tone and tenour of your remarks. His Excellency said that your observations

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

on the three points, 1. of securing a general acceptance in Great Britain, 2. of a *quid pro quo* being given for the great concession which might be made to Russia, and 3. of the necessity of considering the views and susceptibilities of other Powers, were all exceedingly sound and weighty, and had his entire concurrence. But in any case the exchange of views between you and Count Benckendorff was a *chose acquise*, and His Excellency was evidently much pleased at the vista which had been opened out. He was heartily with you in the opinion that to make the arrangement between Russia and Great Britain complete and durable it would be desirable to take into consideration the existing arrangements with respect to the passage of the Dardanelles.

He must naturally think well over the matter before expressing any official opinion or sending a reply, but he would give the matter his most earnest attention.

I have rarely seen M. Isvolsky so contented and satisfied: and the evidence of the goodwill and earnest desire of His Majesty's Government to establish relations between Great Britain and Russia on a thoroughly satisfactory basis will, I trust, have a good effect on the deliberation of the outstanding points of the Asiatic negotiations.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

There is a shade of difference in the words "it would be desirable to take into consideration etc" from what I actually said. The natural meaning of my words would rather be "when the question came up for consideration," etc.

F. G.

No. 260.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/322.

(No. 160.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 26, 1907.

R. April 2, 1907.

The French Ambassador mentioned to me last night that he gathered from M. Isvolsky that the latter was becoming uneasy lest Germany was contemplating some intervention in the Anglo-Russian negotiations of a disagreeable nature. He understood from M. Isvolsky that nothing had been said either here or at Berlin on the subject, but M. Bompard believed that certain articles in some German newspapers warning the German public as to the attempts to isolate Germany had disquieted M. Isvolsky, as being possibly the precursors of some observations from official quarters. M. Bompard said that he trusted that the negotiations would be speedily brought to a conclusion so as to prevent any endeavour to hamper or delay them.

I told my French colleague that I had not noticed any uneasiness on the part of M. Isvolsky, and that I did not quite see on what grounds Germany could intervene in matters which in no wise affected her interests. I was, however, of his opinion that the sooner the negotiations were concluded the better, now that the press had begun to turn their attention to the matter, and had published more or less incomplete statements in regard to the scope and nature of the discussions. In fact I could tell him that I had quite recently impressed this consideration on M. Isvolsky, who was doing his best to expedite matters.

Others of my colleagues have drawn my attention to the audiences which the German and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors had on two consecutive days of the Emperor, and to their frequent interviews with M. Isvolsky. This activity is attributed by some to the negotiations which Russia is conducting with Great Britain and Japan. Personally, I am inclined to believe that the two Ambassadors have been chiefly preoccupied with the question of the limitation of armaments, and with the mode in which His Majesty's Government may present that matter to the Conference.

At the same time I do not disguise from myself that the relations between the German and Russian Courts and Governments are at the present moment exceedingly intimate and cordial, and that the influence of the French Embassy has of late correspondingly declined. My United States colleague tells me that he knows from an undoubted source that at the banquet given at the Palace on the birthday of the German Emperor, the Emperor of Russia after proposing the health of "his brother and friend," observed to the German Ambassador that "brother" was far more than "friend," and that this remark was interpreted by M. von Schoen as meaning that France was the friend, but Germany the brother.

But while admitting that many motives impel the Emperor and his Government to draw nearer to Germany and to accept as an unfortunate necessity the alliance with France, it seems to me that more powerful factors than personal sympathy will counteract to a great extent the tendency to drift too much into the orbit of Berlin.

I have little doubt that it is the present aim of the Russian Government to remodel their policy in the Far and Middle East, and to husband their resources and keep their hands free for recovering their position as a European Power.

It is I think indubitable that the Russian Government have renounced their forward policy in those regions, and the whole tenour and trend of their negotiations both with Great Britain and Japan show, I think, that they are more intent on strengthening their position of defence rather than preparing for any aggressive action. As regards their negotiations with Great Britain, this, I think, is especially noticeable; and the proposals they make and the concessions they are willing to give are evidence, I submit, that it is a defensive and not an aggressive policy which they are adopting. Moreover, matters have advanced too far both with Great Britain and Japan, to permit Russia, even under pressure from her western neighbour, to alter the course on which she has been sailing during the past twelve months. I feel no uneasiness on that score. Nevertheless I am strongly of opinion that it will be well to terminate the negotiations without undue delay and to bring the Convention safely into port. Although the western neighbour might consider it impolitic or impossible to attempt openly to thwart the negotiations, she might indirectly influence them by suggesting modifications which she knew would create discord, or what is more probable, she might require from the Russian Government, for her part, certain concessions or engagements which would weaken, or in a measure, nullify the happy results which a cordial understanding between Russia, Great Britain and Japan should produce.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

I think we all agree as to the advisability of these negotiations being concluded as soon as possible but the delay is not on our side.

C. H.

E. G.

No. 261.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, March 27, 1907.

. . . .⁽²⁾ He [M. Isvolski] is beaming with pleasure over the report which Poklewsky brought to him of your communication to Count Benckendorff in regard to the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.⁽³⁾ He quite grasped the sense of your

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter refers to the Persian negotiations and Russo-Japanese relations, and is of a purely formal character.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 280-1, No. 258.]

observations and will study the question thoroughly before making an overture; but the fact that the British Gov[ernment] are willing to discuss the question is, he considers, and as he expressed it, a great evolution in our relations and a historical event. The statement which you made will undoubtedly have a beneficial influence on our Asiatic discussions, and will render the Russians disinclined to insist on any minor points of difference. In fact I see no serious rocks ahead. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Your sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽⁴⁾ [The omitted paragraph refers to the Hague Peace Conference.]

[ED. NOTE.—*The Mongolian Frontier Formula.*—The following papers all relate to a somewhat obscure incident and are accordingly grouped together. The earlier negotiations are referred to in a Foreign Office memorandum written in January 1907, *infra*, pp. 341–2. From that point they may be summarised as follows: On January 5, 1907, M. Isvolski mentioned to Sir A. Nicolson the question of including a reference to Mongolia in the proposed Convention regarding Thibet, suggesting that it might be possible to state there “the desire of the two Governments that no alterations should be introduced in the existing administrative system of Mongolia.” Sir A. Nicolson reported this to Sir Edward Grey in his despatch No. 19 of January 6, R. January 21. On the 16th Sir A. Nicolson reported that in a conversation of the previous day M. Isvolski had discussed with him the negotiations then in progress between Japan and Russia for a commercial treaty, and stated that he hoped “to go a little farther” than a purely commercial understanding. The Russo-Japanese negotiations continued to develop on these lines, and on March 6, Baron Komura informed Sir Edward Grey that definite proposals had been received from the Russian Government, and that his own Government were preparing a counter-draft. Sir Edward Grey told Baron Komura “that Russia had made some mention of Mongolia when we were discussing Thibet.” Baron Komura said that no mention had been made of Mongolia in the Russo-Japanese negotiations (Sir E. Grey to Mr. Lowther, No. 47 of March 7, 1907). Two days later Sir Edward Grey was informed by Baron Komura that the Japanese counter-draft had been presented. “I reminded him of the inquiry Russia had made concerning Mongolia I thought we might advise some formula, such as a promise to give our diplomatic support to the maintenance of security on the whole extent of the Chinese frontier” (Sir E. Grey to Mr. Lowther, No. 60 of March 18, 1907). Sir A. Nicolson wrote a private letter to Sir Edward Grey on March 26, which is reproduced below as No. 262 (a). It enclosed a copy of the formula which had been given to him by M. Isvolski, having been originally communicated by Sir Edward Grey to Count Benckendorff. This formula is printed below as enclosure to No. 262 (a). On March 31, M. Poklevski informed Sir A. Nicolson that M. Isvolski would probably accept the formula with some “modifications de rédaction.”]

No. 262 (a).

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

British Embassy, St. Petersburg, March 26, 1907.

M. Iswolsky has alluded once or twice to the “formula” which was communicated privately to C[oun]t Benckendorff, and of which he gave me the enclosed copy. It tallies with what Hardinge sent me in a private letter. M. Iswolsky has not yet formed an opinion on the terms of the formula, though he remarked that it was a little vague. He wishes to know what ground is covered by the expression “s'appuyer.” Does this, he asks, mean material or merely diplomatic support? Would you kindly let me know your interpretation so that I may reply should he again refer to the point?

In another letter I will write as to our negotiations, &c. I believe Hardinge will be away when the messenger reaches London, so I trouble you with this question.

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

Enclosure in No. 262 (a).

The Mongolian Frontier Formula.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de la Russie s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Chine et animés du sincère désir de voir l'ordre et le développement pacifique se maintenir sur toute l'étendue de leurs frontières avec la Chine, s'engagent à s'appuyer mutuellement pour assurer la paix et la sécurité sur leurs frontières respectives.

No. 262 (b).

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

*Fallodon, Christon Bank,**Northumberland, April 1, 1907.*

This formula arose out of the Russian anxiety to get some security on the Mongolian frontier. That is not a place where we would give material support; "s'appuyer" must therefore be diplomatic support, good offices, or whatever other varieties of diplomatic support there may be, given at Peking or wherever it would be useful.

The position is this; if Russia guarantees not to disturb Japan or ourselves, she gets in return a promise from each separately not to disturb her. But this leaves a large part of the Russian frontier in the Far East, which is not directly covered by such a promise given by Japan or ourselves. The formula simply means that our influence will be used to prevent Russia being disturbed on the Chinese part of her frontier.

Komura laughed at the idea of her being disturbed by China who was not in a position to be aggressive outside the Chinese frontier, but that is no argument against adopting some formula of this kind if Russia asks for it.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

(1) [Carnock MSS.]

No. 262 (c).

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

Tel.

Foreign Office, April 3, 1907.

D. 1.45 P.M.

Private.

Your private letter of the 26th "s'appuyer" means diplomatic support and use of our influence diplomatically especially at Peking. We could not give armed support in such a place as the Mongolian frontier."

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

[ED. NOTE.—The later negotiations on this subject may be summarised briefly. On April 12 the formula was still being considered by the Russian Government. But meanwhile M. Bompard had submitted a French formula to M. Isvolski on April 10, and he gave Sir A. Nicolson his impression that M. Isvolski "would be disturbed ("inquiété") by the series of formulæ which was now being submitted to him." The result of the Franco-Japanese and

Russo-Japanese negotiations was seen in the treaties signed on June 10, 1907, and July 30 respectively. On May 2 Sir Charles Hardinge wrote to Sir A. Nicolson "We have heard nothing more of the Mongolian proposal. Do you think the question has been forgotten? I hope so." (Carnock MSS.)

So far as the Editors have been able to discover, this hope was fully realized, *cp. infra*, p. 299, No. 280.]

No. 263.

Note by Sir C. Hardinge.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/321.

Foreign Office, April 2, 1907.

Count Benckendorff called and read me extracts from a letter which he had received from M. Isvolsky⁽²⁾ in which the latter stated that he had communicated to the Emperor your mem[orandu]m about the Dardanelles and the note about Mongolia, &c.⁽³⁾ and that they had created the best possible effect, the Emperor laying special stress on his satisfaction at the views of the Gov[ernmen]t on the Dardanelles question.

M. Isvolsky asked C[oun]t Benckendorff to thank you and to say that he fully appreciated the objections which you had raised to the Dardanelles question coming within the present agreement and that he thoroughly understood their importance.

Count Benckendorff asked me to convey to you these messages.

C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [The substance of this note was sent to Sir A. Nicolson in the form of a despatch, No. 150, April 10, 1907.]

⁽²⁾ [This private letter was almost identical with the Memorandum printed below as enclosure in No. 265.]

⁽³⁾ [For the memorandum on the Dardanelles, *v. supra*, pp. 280-1, No. 258. The substance of this despatch was communicated to M. Isvolski as a memorandum. The note about Mongolia is given, *supra*, p. 285.]

No. 264.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/347.

Tel. (No. 65.)

St. Petersburg, April 14, 1907.

Straits and Bosphorus.

Your despatch No. 120.⁽¹⁾

I have received Memo[randum] from the Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] relative to your conversation with Russian Ambassador. Russian Gov[ernmen]t note with pleasure disposition of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t to discuss question and that closing of Straits is no longer cardinal point of British policy. Russian Gov[ernmen]t consider it would be inopportune to conclude special arrangement as to the Straits during the course of the present negotiations. They therefore take act of the disposition of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t and reserve discussion of question of revising the stipulations concerning the Straits to a more favourable opportunity.

I will send copy of the Memorandum tomorrow by safe opportunity. It is couched in very friendly terms and it is satisfactory Russian Gov[ernmen]t do not wish to introduce question into present negotiations. Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] tells me he is forwarding copy of Memo[randum] to the Russian Ambassador.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 280-1, No. 258.]

No. 265.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/347.

(No. 202.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. April 14, 1907.**R. April 19, 1907.*

I have the honour to transmit, herewith, copy of a Memorandum which M. Isvolsky communicated to me in regard to the question of revising the Treaty stipulations concerning the passage of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.

I telegraphed the substance of the above Memorandum in my telegram No. 65⁽¹⁾ of to-day's date.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 265.

Memorandum.

Quoique le C[om]te de Benckendorff n'ait pas été muni d'instructions précises relativement à la question des détroits, sa parfaite connaissance des vues du Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial lui a permis d'exposer à Sir E. Grey les *desiderata* russes à ce sujet d'une façon qui répond à nos intérêts historiques et à notre situation géographique. Du reste cette initiative n'a fait qu'accélérer un échange de vues qui devait nécessairement se produire au cours de nos négociations actuelles dans le but d'éviter toute cause de malentendu dans l'avenir.

Le résultat des conversations entre le C[om]te de Benckendorff et le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères Britannique consigné dans le mémorandum susmentionné doit être considéré comme hautement satisfaisant. C'est avec le plus vif plaisir que le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial a constaté que le maintien des stipulations existantes relativement au passage des détroits ne forme plus un point déterminé de la politique de la Grande Bretagne. Nous attachons aussi la plus grande importance au fait que Sir E. Grey n'a pas formé d'objection principielle à un projet d'arrangement qui donnerait aux navires de guerre russes le droit exclusif de passer les détroits dans les deux sens, tandis que les forces navales des autres Puissances ne pourraient pas entrer dans la Mer Noire. Enfin nous nous plaignons à relever que le Principal Secrétaire aux Affaires Etrangères s'est même déclaré prêt à discuter dès à présent dans de certaines conditions nos propositions, si nous en prenons l'initiative.

Il est évident que le point de vue anglais sur la question des détroits ainsi formulé est de nature à écarter une des causes principales des malentendus précédents entre la Russie et l'Angleterre et tout en facilitant la solution du problème des détroits dans un sens favorable à la Russie contribuerait puissamment à l'établissement de relations cordiales entre les deux pays conformément au désir sincère des deux Gouvernements.

Les quelques observations de Sir E. Grey contenues dans le même mémorandum ont été soigneusement examinées par le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial; celui-ci est entièrement d'avis qu'il serait inopportun de conclure un arrangement spécial pour les détroits au cours des négociations présentes qui n'ont pour but avéré que le règlement des questions pendantes en Asie. Il n'est évidemment ni dans l'intérêt de la Russie, ni dans celui de l'Angleterre d'éveiller des susceptibilités d'autres Puissances auxquelles tant Sir E. Grey que le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial ont à maintes reprises donné des explications dans le sens susindiqué.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial se borne donc pour le moment à prendre acte des dispositions du Gouv[ernemen]t Britannique et se réserve de soulever la question de la révision des stipulations concernant les détroits à une époque plus favorable. Il ne manquera pas à cette occasion de prendre en juste considération la réserve de

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

Sir E. Grey relativement à une compensation éventuelle en faveur de l'Angleterre, compensation qui pourrait toucher à un problème international dans le genre de ceux mentionnés dans le mémorandum anglais.

Je me plais à espérer qu'au moment où la question des détroits sera soulevée par nous, le résultat de nos négociations actuelles aura déjà produit son influence bienfaisante et que par conséquent l'opposition d'une partie de l'opinion publique anglaise à un pareil arrangement sera réduite à des proportions insignifiantes.

Il me semble aussi utile d'ajouter que tout comme l'Angleterre la Russie ne compte pas s'engager plus avant dans cette affaire sans un accord avec la France.

MINUTE.

It appears to me that the Russian Government are taking a most unfair advantage of the expressions used by Sir E. Grey in his conversation with C[oun]t Benckendorff recorded in his despatch of March 19, 1907, to Sir A. Nicolson⁽²⁾; and still more of his judicious silence on certain points. An attempt is made to extract from the latter an implied consent to Russian vessels of war having an *exclusive* right of exit, and to the denial of equal rights of entry to the waters of the Black Sea to the ships of other Powers. It is also apparently suggested that we should enter into a sort of conspiracy of silence at the expense of the other Powers, who have a right to be consulted: especially Austria Hungary—in virtue of the Danube and Roumania. I hope a clear and emphatic caveat will be at once put in against the language of the Russian Foreign Office and their covert insinuations.

F.

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 280–1, No. 258.]

No. 266.

Colonel Napier to Sir A. Nicolson.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir A. Nicolson, No. 230, of April 25, 1907.)

F.O. 971/323.

(No. 15.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, April 25, 1907.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I was received by the Emperor to-day, on the occasion of relinquishing my post as Military Attaché. Owing to the advent of Russian Easter, this took place earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

His Majesty received me graciously, and asked me about my previous services. On hearing that I had been in Persia as Military Attaché, the Emperor turned the conversation on to that subject and on to the personality of the Shah and of the Atabeg; he had not met the former, but the latter he knew and appreciated. He knew the people had endeavoured to stop his landing at Resht, but that had been satisfactorily disposed of, and the Atabeg would he hoped, prove the strong man that the country needed. I took occasion to observe that it was very fortunate that Russia and England were now of one mind as regards Persian affairs, and that there had been a great deal of waste of energy in opposing each other on all points. His Majesty thoroughly agreed and declared that he was very pleased to hear from M. Izvolsky of the favourable course of negotiations, and evidently considered that matters were settled as regards Persia. Referring to Afghanistan, His Majesty said that he was in favour of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer State, but that there were some arrangements necessary in order to enable the neighbouring people to live in amity with each other. I presumed that his Majesty referred to arrangements for settling local frontier matters direct, to which he agreed, and added that also in matters of trade it was impossible in these days to build up a Chinese wall against one's neighbours. I ventured to say that our negotiations were a little complicated in view of the fact of the independence of the Amir in relation to his own internal affairs, and that the

policy of his late father had been to keep himself as free as possible from all such instruments of civilization as trade relations and ways of communication, such as railways, in order to preserve his independence. His Majesty remarked that he understood this, but of course there was no intention of aiming at the Amir's independence.

Referring again to the subject of the good-will that was now being displayed between the two nations, His Majesty remarked that he thought it would take some time before the respective minor officials and agents of the two countries would work together, perhaps one year, but that once the Heads of Governments were agreed, the others would soon come into line, in fact there was nothing else for them to do. His Majesty then referred to the evil effect of the Press. "When one reads the same calumnies day after day, one's own ideas insensibly take the colour of what one reads, and the control of these irresponsible people who compose the newspapers, is one of the most difficult questions of the present time."

His Majesty appeared to be in good health and spirits, and on bidding me goodbye graciously expressed the hope that we might meet again.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *Lieutenant-Colonel,
Military Attaché.*

No. 267.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 253.) Confidential.

Constantinople, D. April 30, 1907.

Sir,

R. May 6, 1907.

I think it well to report that, in calling upon me on the 8th instant in connection with the 3 %, the Grand Master of Ceremonies Ghalib Pasha remarked that the Sultan was perplexed and somewhat disturbed at the reports he had heard in regard to the Anglo-Russian negotiations and wished to know whether I could tell His Majesty quite privately and unofficially their general nature and whether they referred to this country.

I said that I did not think you would consider I was wanting in discretion if I told him that as far as I knew these negotiations were connected with a desire on both sides to come to an amicable understanding in respect to Thibet, the Indian frontier and Persia, and that the negotiations in regard to the latter were based on the principle of respecting her territorial integrity.

At the time I spoke to Ghalib Pasha I was not aware of the conversations which had taken place between you and the Russian Ambassador in regard to the passage of the Straits and although these remarks cannot be considered as negotiations I am rather inclined to believe that the suspicions of the Sultan have in one way or another been aroused and that it is probable that he has spoken with greater freedom to the German Ambassador on the subject.

I cannot help thinking that the Germans will find out what has taken place either directly from the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs or else in some subterranean way, and I have no doubt whatever that if this be so they will communicate their information to the Sultan in such a way as to impregnate His Majesty's mind with still further distrust of British policy while at the same time advancing their own interests.

I believe there is nothing the present Sultan would more dislike or would more strenuously oppose than the opening of the Straits of the Dardanelles to Foreign men-of-war.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

MINUTES.

Sir N. O'Connor has by implication conveyed an assurance that the Anglo-Russian negotiations do not touch upon the question of opening the straits to foreign warships. As the arrangement will of course be intensely distasteful to the Sultan it would be as well that what has passed between the two Gov[ernmen]ts on the subject should be kept from H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] as long as possible.

Q[uer]y. Inform Sir A. Nicolson of the substance of this desp[atch] by telegraph and instruct him to urge upon Russian Gov[ernmen]t the necessity of observing the strictest secrecy in the matter for the present.

E. G. L.
7/5/07.

If the Germans are going to find out what has passed by "subterranean" methods we shall not prevent them from doing so by urging the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to observe strict secrecy. I doubt also if such a representation would be well received.

R. P. M.

I agree with Mr. Maxwell. If the relations between the Czar and the Emperor William are as close as Mr. Lister has recently reported in a private letter which is confirmed by Mr. O'Beirne, the Germans will find out all that they may want to know I expect.

L. M.

I spoke this morning to C[oun]t Benckendorff of the danger of the Sultan knowing what had passed between the two Gov[ernmen]ts relating to the passage of the Straits, and of the risk of the Sultan leaning still more on Germany and actually concluding an alliance. He fully realised the danger and said he would point it out to his Gov[ernmen]t.

C. H.

This is all we can do.

E. G.

No. 268.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/347.

(No. 166.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 1, 1907.

I gave Count Benckendorff a Memorandum of which a copy is inclosed commenting on the Russian reply to our conversation about the Straits.

Count Benckendorff, after reading it, enquired what I meant by "questions which it was not necessary for us to discuss unless they were raised by other Powers."

I told him that what was in my mind was the right of exit from the Black Sea of other limitrophe Powers besides Russia. That was the sort of question which we had no interest in raising, but which might be raised by the Powers concerned.

All I meant, therefore, was that there might be some questions which we must be free to consider if they were raised by others, though it was not our business or desire to raise them.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 268.

Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey.

Foreign Office, April 27, 1907.

The text of the Memorandum communicated by the Russian Government on the subject of the Straits⁽¹⁾ contains a summary of the original proposal made by Count Benckendorff which, owing to certain omissions, probably due to a desire for brevity,

⁽¹⁾ [v. supra, pp. 287-8, No. 265, encl.]

might possibly convey a different impression of the scope of the proposal originally stated in my Memorandum of 19 March.⁽²⁾

The original proposal did not exclude a right of exit from the Black Sea and the Straits being allowed to other limitrophe Powers on the Black Sea. And the Memorandum makes no definite mention of the fact that the proposal contemplated the passage of the Dardanelles and the rest of the Straits being made available for other Powers as far as the entrance to the Black Sea on the same terms for all, although it is certainly implied.

I do not wish, however, to discuss the particular conditions under which the existing arrangements with regard to the Straits might be altered. Some of them it would not be necessary for Great Britain to discuss at all, unless they were raised by other Powers; and I do not wish to be regarded as committed to any particular proposal, though, on the other hand, I do not wish to attach conditions now which would prevent any particular proposals from being discussed when the time comes.

I am glad that the Russian Government have agreed to let the matter rest for the present as it was left by my reply to Count Benckendorff. But I should like to say that one consideration which affected me in coming to this conclusion was that stated in the Russian Memorandum: that, if the negotiations now in progress between the two Governments with regard to Asiatic questions had a satisfactory result, the effect upon British public opinion would be such as very much to facilitate a discussion of the Straits question if it came up later on. I have no doubt whatever that, if as a result of the present negotiations, the British and Russian Governments remained on good terms in Asia, the effect on British public opinion and on any British Government with regard to other questions, including this, would be very great.

[E. GREY.]

(2) [*cp.* conversation between Sir E. Grey and Count Benckendorff of March 19, *supra*, pp. 280-1, No. 258. The substance of Sir E. Grey's remarks in this conversation was communicated to Count Benckendorff as a memorandum.]

No. 269.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 169.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 1, 1907.

Count Benckendorff in conversation to-day expressed special satisfaction at Prince Bülow's reference to Anglo-Russian negotiations.

I told him I thought his phrase that Germany must not live on the enmity of other nations amongst themselves was excellent.

Count Benckendorff remarked that the expression Prince Bülow had used about Persia was a little elastic. The words were translated in English to the effect that he claimed a "fair field." But the German word went a little further, and implied rather "field to expand."

I pointed out that this was used only in the commercial sense. But I admitted that, as in the case of Morocco, a commercial sense sometimes had political consequences.

It seemed to me that Germany was jealous of the way in which other Powers were settling their differences with each other and improving their relations, while she was not settling any difficulties with anyone.

I also observed that Germany might have an opportunity in connection with the Bagdad Railway. That question might be settled in co-operation with France, Russia, and ourselves.

Count Benckendorff admitted that such a settlement would be desirable, because as the Railway would be a new through-route to the East it was bound to have political consequences.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 270.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, May 1, 1907.

. . . . (2) The Russians are taking a long time about Afghanistan. And it would be desirable, when we have all their proposals, to get our Persian line moved up so as to start from Zulficar. Otherwise, I foresee that people here will fasten upon the Clause respecting concessions in the neutral zone, and say that Russia will take advantage of it to push a railway concession right up to the Afghan frontier on the side of Herat.

It would, of course, have been better if we had stated at the beginning that our line should start at Zulficar, and I see the difficulty of raising the question now. But I think it might be done in return for some concession on our part about the Seistan telegraph. We might, for instance, agree to leave the control of the Meshed-Seistan line in Russian hands as far as the limit of their sphere, reserving only the rest for ourselves. I must discuss this with the India Office.

Lord Percy spoke to me the other day about Persia. He does not, so far as I am aware, know the conditions of our negotiations. But he told me that he was opposed to any division of Persia into spheres, on the ground that it would end in the Russians pushing railways unopposed up to the beginning of our sphere. The Agreement would be valid only on paper: the Russians would break it later on, when they were in a favourable position, after having taken advantage of it in the way he indicated.

I do not in the least agree with this. I do not believe the Agreement will be broken if our general relations with Russia are good: which I believe will be the result of the Agreement.

And, if we have no Agreement, we shall soon have to choose between seeing the Russians push communications right up to Herat and into Seistan, or annexing parts of Persia ourselves in order to prevent them. Each of these alternatives is an exceedingly undesirable thing.

But I tell you what Percy said, in order that you may see the line of criticism which we may have to meet.

I am strongly in favour of concluding the Agreement on the lines now laid down, and I believe it will do a great deal of good to both Countries.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The omitted paragraph refers to the Hague Peace Conference, and will be printed in the relevant chapter of a succeeding volume.]

No. 271.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, May 8, 1907.

. . . . (2) I do not share Percy's views. Once we have come to an agreement with Russia and have obtained her signature, I do not consider it likely that she will disown

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 38.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this long letter discusses the inadvisability of re-opening the question of the boundary line of the British sphere.]

her engagements, it would not be in her interests to do so. Since the Japanese war her Asiatic policy has necessarily undergone a marked change, from an aggressive to a defensive one: and there are several other important considerations which curb her aspirations.

I think that we can rely with confidence on 15 or 20 years of peace and breathing time: and in political affairs we cannot with safety look further ahead. If we regard Russia as incurably smitten with bad faith, it would, I admit, be useless to make any agreements with her, and we should have to resign ourselves to a continuation of the former unsatisfactory relations. But, looking at all the circumstances, present and future, I think it was wise to come to an agreement. Doubtless it will take some time for the agents of Russia, perhaps even for some of our own, to recognize and adapt themselves to a new order of things: but it will be a great gain to have a written agreement to which to appeal. As to Persia, I cannot conceive on what lines other than those which we have laid down, an agreement could have been reached. We hamper and bind no one but ourselves and Russia. We both simply lay certain restrictions on our complete liberty of action, for the very righteous purposes of mutual good will and peace. Surely no one can object to this self denying action not even the Persians. We do not ask the latter to take any engagements, nor do we impose any limitations on their independence. They will remain after as before the agreement as free and unfettered as they themselves had permitted themselves to be. It is on this important point that the Anglo-Russian agreement is differentiated from the Anglo-French agreement regarding Morocco. In the latter case we gave France a free hand to reform and reorganize Morocco and thereby implied a certain protective right of France over Morocco. In the present instance we expressly recognize the right of Persia to manage her own affairs; we merely limit our own sphere of action: and I do not see how this procedure can be interpreted as a partition of Persia into spheres, in the sense in which that term is generally used.

Pray forgive me for writing at such length and on matters on which you are so far better able to judge than myself.

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

P.S.—I should perhaps have mentioned that there might be an advantage of having an intervening neutral zone between the respective spheres, and thus avoid their being contiguous.

No. 272.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 180.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 14, 1907.

I transmit to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith copy of a despatch which has been received from H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Constantinople⁽¹⁾ reporting the substance of a private enquiry which has been made by Ghalib Pasha, Grand Master of the Ceremonies on the subject of the Anglo-Russian negotiations.

It will be seen from this despatch that Sir N. O'Connor is apprehensive lest the German Government should succeed in obtaining information from the Russian Government with regard to what has passed between the British and Russian Governments on the subject of the possible opening of the straits of the Dardanelles to foreign ships of war, and lest such information should be communicated to H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] the Sultan.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

The attention of the Russian Ambassador, who called at this office a few days ago, has been called to this danger and to the undesirable consequences which might ensue if the Sultan should be induced to lean still more upon the support of Germany or indeed actually conclude an alliance with that country.

Count Benckendorff stated in reply that he fully realized the danger in question and that he would point it out to his Government.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 273.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/321.

(No. 273.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. May 22, 1907.

R. May 27, 1907.

Sir,

I mentioned to M. Isvolsky to-day that the Sultan of Turkey appeared to have been interesting himself in the scope of our negotiations, and I believed that the matter had been mentioned to Count Benckendorff in London. His Excellency said that he doubted if the Sultan had any inkling as to the question of the Dardanelles having been mentioned between the two Governments, and in any case it was quite impossible that any leakage had occurred from the Russian side on that subject. The Turkish Ambassador had, from time to time, enquired as to our negotiations, and he had always told Husny Pasha that they dealt merely with matters in Central Asia and Persia.

I have, &c.
A. NICOLSON.

No. 274.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Foreign Office, July 10, 1907.

. . . .⁽²⁾ Your recent telegrams on Afghanistan are not reassuring. We cannot admit the possibility of Russian intervention in Afghanistan nor the limitation of our own right of intervention. They must trust us to act in a friendly way to them in our relations with the Ameer and to honestly endeavour to carry out the engagements which we have undertaken. It looks however as though the influence of the military party was again in the ascendent, and as if Isvolsky was no longer so keen to sign quickly owing to Stolypin being now more firmly in the saddle. Anxious as we are to conclude these long negotiations we feel that it would be a mistake to show too much "empressement," but I am sure you will realise that we cannot push questions through so quickly as we have recently done when Parliament rises and the Cabinet is scattered in different directions. Recently we have left the Gov[ernmen]t of India entirely out of our account, and the questions which have arisen have been treated directly between us and the India Office, reference being made only to the Prime Minister and Lord Ripon.

I think we may regard the Persian Convention as practically completed. We have referred to the India Office the last proposal for the deflection to Khaf of the frontier of the Russian zone and we have recommended its acceptance. I do not see what the Russians gain by bringing Khaf into their zone, but it may be a matter of "amour propre" with them. Also I do not see any particular disadvantage to us in the

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The omitted paragraph refers to the procedure for the signing of the Conventions.]

proposal. This I think is the only outstanding point, as we are writing to you by this bag to say that we accept the modification in the drafting of Art[icle] V proposed by Isvolsky.

As regards the tel[egraph] lines all we want is that our southern and central tel[egraph] lines may retain their connection with Tehran. To get the renewal of this concession we are willing to hand over the Tehran-Khanikin line and to renounce the section of the Meshed-Seistan line within the Russian zone. If the Russians are obstinate upon this point, we must retain the lines we now hold, except the Tehran-Meshed line, until the close of our concessions in 1925. I cannot think that they would like this. This question is however outside the Convention.

Having practically finished the Russian and Thibetan Conventions it will be a great pity if they are to be wrecked over the Afghan Convention, but we have to be firm in our treatment of Afghanistan, and any attempt at encroachment on our position in that country will only show that the Russians have sinister designs for the future. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽³⁾ [The concluding paragraphs are of a purely formal character.]

No. 275.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/347.

(No. 371.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, July 10, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a memorandum which M. Isvolsky gave me today relative to the question of revising Treaty arrangements connected with the Dardanelles and the Bosphorous. His Excellency said that he had thought it as well to take note of the reservations which you had made in your memorandum of April last, and that his memorandum was in substance merely an acknowledgement of the receipt of your communication.

I believe that a copy of the Russian memorandum will be handed to you by Count Benckendorff.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 275.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolski, July 10, 1907.

Dans son memorandum du 26 avril⁽¹⁾ courant Sir E. Grey récapitule les conversations qu'il a eues avec le C[om]te Benckendorff relativement à une révision éventuelle des arrangements internationaux existants pour le passage des détroits et constate que la proposition originale formulée par notre Ambassadeur à Londres n'excluait pas le droit de sortie de la Mer Noire pour les navires de guerre des autres Puissances riveraines de la Mer Noire et admettait l'usage des Dardanelles et des détroits jusqu'à l'entrée de la Mer Noire par toutes les Puissances sur un pied d'égalité complète.

Ne voulant pas discuter les conditions spéciales d'une révision possible des traités sur les détroits, Sir E. Grey ne désire d'un côté ni être considéré comme lié à

⁽¹⁾ [It was really of the 27th and enclosed in despatch No. 166 of May 1, to Sir A. Nicolson, v. *supra*, pp. 290-1, No. 268.]

une proposition spéciale de solution de cette question, ni, de l'autre, poser dès maintenant des conditions qui empêcheraient la discussion libre de toute proposition qui pourrait être faite à un moment opportun.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] prend note des observations formulées par le Gouv[ernemen]t de S[a] M[a]j[esté] B[ritannique]. Les deux premières étaient déjà connues par les rapports du C[om]te Benckendorff, et si elles n'étaient pas mentionnées dans le memorandum du Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] du 14 avril, c'est que dans l'opinion de ce Gouv[ernemen]t elles se rapportaient à des questions de détail qui pouvaient être laissées ouvertes jusqu'au moment où la révision des traités sur les détroits deviendrait possible.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] constate avec le plus vif plaisir que dans les grandes lignes le point de vue du Gouv[ernemen]t Royal sur cette question est conforme à celui de la Russie. Cette identité de vues ressort aussi du fait que le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] non plus ne désire pas être considéré dès à présent comme engagé par une certaine formule de solution de la question des détroits. Mais il aime à espérer que quand le moment viendra de soumettre une proposition précise à la considération du Gouv[ernemen]t Royal, il trouvera auprès de Lui un accueil [*sic*] favorable auquel le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] sera justifié de s'attendre après l'échange de vues amical qui vient d'avoir lieu entre les deux Gouvernements.

St. Petersburg,

le 27 Juin/10 Juillet, 1907.

MINUTES.

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t take note of your *Pro-Memoria* of April 27 respecting the right of exit from the Black Sea for vessels of war belonging to other Black Sea Powers than Russia and respecting the use of the Dardanelles as far as the entrance of the Black Sea by all Powers.

L. M.

I think there is nothing in the Russian memorandum to take exception to as placing a wrong construction upon anything in ours. M. Isvolsky does not refer to the fact that good relations in Asia were a preliminary condition to a discussion of the Straits, but that was clear in our memo[randu]m.

E. G.

No. 276.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 371/347.

(No. 291.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 31, 1907.

I told Count Benckendorff to-day that I had received M. Isvolsky's last Memorandum on the subject of the Passage of the Straits.⁽¹⁾ It was not put in a form which required any reply.

I wished to observe, however, that both my Memoranda⁽²⁾ on this subject had contemplated a friendly agreement about Asiatic questions, which should work well, as being a preliminary condition to any arrangement about the Straits.

Count Benckendorff said it was quite understood that this was so. And I told him I had concluded that M. Isvolsky's Memorandum assumed this, but as it was not explicitly mentioned I had made the observation.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 280-1, No. 258, and pp. 290-1, No. 268, *encl.*]

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 371/326.

(No. 300.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 6, 1907.

Count Benckendorff observed to me to-day that he hoped the fact that M. Isvolsky had been present at the meeting of the Tzar and the German Emperor⁽¹⁾ had not given rise to any apprehension in our minds that the discussions at the meeting were in any way prejudicial to the negotiations now proceeding, or to the good relations, between England and Russia.

He especially called my attention to the penultimate paragraph of the semi-official communiqué from St. Petersburg, in which the pending Convention between Russia and Great Britain was referred to, and it was recognised that it would conduce in the highest degree to the peace of the world.

I told him we understood perfectly that, Russia and Germany being neighbours, it was natural for them to have discussions and communications with each other. We relied on the Russian Government to see that, in any communications which took place, she was not influenced to our prejudice by Germany in matters which affected Russia and ourselves alone.

Count Benckendorff was certain that there was no danger of this.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [This was the meeting at Swinemünde August 3-6, v. G.P., XXII, pp. 67-72.]

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 10, 1907.

F.O. 371/326.

D. 6.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 139.)

R. 9 P.M.

Interview of two Emperors.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that he desired to correct a statement which had appeared in the press to the effect that he had communicated to Prince Bülow terms of proposed Anglo-Russian Agreements. He had communicated no details whatever. He had informed Chancellor, as he had previously done, that the proposed Agreements did not in any way affect German interests, and he might tell me that Prince Bülow seemed completely satisfied by this assurance.

He had found the Prince equally conciliatory with regard to French policy in Morocco. His Highness expressed himself as quite contented with assurance conveyed by French Government to Prince Radolin that France contemplated no action which would infringe Algeciras Arrangement. His Excellency said that, generally speaking, the gist of his conversation with Prince Bülow was given in the communiqué transmitted in my despatch No. 402,⁽¹⁾ and he seemed highly pleased with result of interview.

(¹) [This despatch, dated August 6, enclosed a translation of a communiqué issued through the St. Petersburg Telegraphic Agency, describing the interview. It referred to "the Agreements about to be concluded between Russia and England" as "contributing in the highest degree to the maintenance of general tranquillity."]

MINUTE.

The German Government are naturally delighted at French difficulties in Morocco. They anticipate that as these difficulties increase, the French will become more and more disgusted at their position and dissatisfied with an Agreement which has been so beneficial to Great Britain and which brought them nothing but trouble.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 279.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/326.

(No. 407.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 10, 1907.

R. August 19, 1907.

By my telegram No. 139⁽¹⁾ I have had the honour to report to you the substance of a statement made to me by Mr. Isvolsky this afternoon with regard to the recent meeting between the German Emperor and the Czar. I have not much to add to that report. Mr. Isvolsky made it clear that he desired to show His Majesty's Government the courtesy of giving me some account of what took place. He said that before doing so he must first contradict a report which had appeared in the "*Neue Freie Presse*" to the effect that he had communicated to Prince Bülow the terms of the proposed Anglo-Russian Agreements. He had communicated no details on the subject. He had once more said that the Agreements were intended to remove possible causes of conflict between the interests of the two Powers in the regions adjoining their respective frontiers in Persia and Central Asia; and contained nothing which could affect the interests of Germany.

His Excellency then went on to speak generally of what passed at Swinemünde; and his description was excessively *couleur de rose*. He seemed to have found the Emperor William and the Chancellor in the most amiable disposition. Prince Bülow had shown himself quite free from suspicions as to the aims of the pending negotiations between Great Britain and Russia. His Highness had expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with the explanation given to him, as above described, by Mr. Isvolsky: and he had stated that Germany's only concern was that her commercial interests in Persia should be respected. I asked whether anything was said as to the Bagdad railway. His Excellency said no, and added that the Chancellor was as a rule not prepared to go into the details of any of the questions touched upon, which they treated only in their general aspect.

Prince Bülow, His Excellency continued, had been equally well disposed in reference to the question of French policy in Morocco, and had intimated that the assurance given by Mr. Pichon to the German Ambassador, to the effect that France contemplated no action which would infringe the Algerias settlement, was quite satisfactory to Germany.

In general, Mr. Isvolsky said that the tenour of his conversations with the Chancellor was fairly represented by the communiqué given to the Press. I had the honour to transmit to you a translation of this communication in my despatch No. 402 of the 6th instant.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 280.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. MacDonald

F.O. 371/382.

(No. 168.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 14, 1907.

I told the Japanese Ambassador to-day, when he communicated to me the Convention with Russia,⁽¹⁾ that our negotiations with Russia were proceeding. We were agreed on the main lines. There were some points, however, which it was difficult to reduce to writing, and I doubted whether they could be arranged before next month.

Russia had said nothing more to us about Mongolia or the Chinese frontier, possibly because she had now succeeded in settling that with Japan. Our Agreement with Russia would, therefore, relate only to Thibet, Afghanistan, and Persia.

There had been a question of including the Persian Gulf in our Agreement, but it had been decided not to do that. It was thought better to limit the Agreement to regions in which no other Powers besides Russia and Great Britain had any concern: and one side of the Persian Gulf was outside Persian territory.

But I reminded the Ambassador that we had made public declarations previously of our interests in the Gulf, and we should probably reaffirm them on our own behalf.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*i.e.*, the Russo-Japanese Convention of July 30, 1907. *cp. supra*, pp. 285-6, *Ed. note.*]

No. 281.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, August 20, 1907.*

F.O. 371/325.

Tel. (No. 154.)

D. 2.5 P.M.

R. 6 P.M.

Form of Convention.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a Memorandum communicated to me, says Arrangements as to Persia and Thibet should not be in the form of a Convention, as they treat in the first place of an independent country not a party to Arrangement, and in second place of a vassal of a third Power. He cites the case of our Agreements with France as to Morocco, Egypt, and Siam, which were Declarations, while Newfoundland Question was a Convention. He considers we should of course maintain Preambles in both Arrangements, and sign for our Governments duly authorized thereto. These Arrangements would have exactly the same binding force as a Convention signed with full powers and ratified. He is also of the opinion that formal Conventions would annoy Persian and Chinese Governments, while an Agreement, Declaration or Arrangement simply defining the line of conduct which Russia and Great Britain mutually agree to follow in regard to Persian and Thibetan questions would not have character of an encroachment on sovereign rights of Persia and China.

As to Afghanistan, in view of its special position towards Great Britain, a Convention in due form can be concluded.

Would you agree to Persian and Thibetan Conventions being termed "Arrangements," and signed by us as duly authorised thereto? As we will have to obtain consent of Ameer to terms of the Convention before it comes into force he cannot be offended, and also we have charge of his foreign relations.

MINUTE.

Our wish, as will be seen from 2178,⁽¹⁾ was that all 3 instruments sh[oul]d be drawn in the most formal way possible as "Conventions," but I don't know that they are really more binding

(1) [This paper contains a telegram from Sir A. Nicolson, No. 116 of July 1, 1907, enquiring as to the form of the proposed agreements. Minutes were written on the subject by Mr. W. Maycock, Mr. Mallet and Sir C. Hardinge; and Lord Sanderson wrote a letter upon the subject. These are not reproduced as being technical in character.]

than agreements or any less formal kind of understanding. If a Power wishes to disregard her obligations she will be just as ready to do so whatever they are called. It seems undesirable to argue about what is really only a matter of form, and I should advise agreeing to Sir A. Nicolson's suggestion. It will put the instruments back into the shape they were originally drawn more or less but Sir A. Nicolson (who spoke to me about the question) may be safely left to settle the details.

W. M.
21 Aug.

No. 282.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 426.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 20, 1907.

R. September 3, 1907.

I wrote a private letter to M. Isvolsky in regard to the form in which the several Conventions should be drawn up, and I told him that His Majesty's Government would wish that they should be signed by himself and me as Plenipotentiaries of our respective sovereigns and furnished with full powers. I said that as the instruments treated of questions of great importance and, in fact, laid down the bases on which the future relations of the two countries in Central Asia would in great measure be conducted, it would seem advisable that they should be cast in a formal shape. It was of especial importance that the preambles should be retained, and these, to my mind, would more naturally preface a Convention than an Arrangement.

M. Isvolsky, in conversation, had some doubts on the subject and subsequently embodied his views in an *aide-mémoire*, of which I have the honour to transmit a copy.

I have telegraphed to you on the subject, but this despatch will reach your hands after your decision has been received by me, and I therefore simply forward the document which M. Isvolsky has communicated to me.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 282.

Aide-mémoire.—St. Petersburg, August 6, 1907.

Dans la série d'accords qui ont été conclus entre l'Angleterre et la France, un seulement a été revêtu de la forme d'une Convention, celui qui concerne la Terre-Neuve et l'Afrique.

Il semblerait que dans les relations internationales entre deux Etats il ne peut être question de Convention que lorsqu'il s'agit de droits rentrant dans l'idée de la souveraineté. En effet, les accords anglo-français concernant les territoires susmentionnés, sur lesquels les deux Etats ont respectivement des droits souverains, forment l'objet d'une Convention, tandis que les actes ayant trait au Siam, au Maroc—Etats indépendants,—et à l'Egypte—Etat vassal d'une tierce Puissance,—revêtent la forme de déclarations. Or, dans le cas actuel d'un accord à conclure entre l'Angleterre et la Russie, il est à prendre en considération que la Perse étant un Etat indépendant et le Thibet étant un Etat vassal d'un autre Etat indépendant—la Chine, les deux Parties Contractantes n'ont sur ces régions aucuns droits souverain [sic] dont elles pourraient disposer à leur guise.

Quant à la question du Préambule, sa présence n'implique pas inévitablement la forme de Convention et par conséquent l'obligation de faire ratifier l'acte international dans lequel il se trouve—à preuve l'accord russo-japonais qui vient d'être signé le 17/30 juillet il contient un Préambule et n'a pas été muni de la ratification Impériale.

Il n'y aurait donc aucun inconvénient à ce que les arrangements projetés même étant qualifiés de déclarations, arrangements ou accords, conservent leur préambule, dont l'importance est incontestable.

D'ailleurs, au point de vue des intérêts de l'Angleterre et de la Russie, la préférence accordée à ces derniers termes sur celui de "Conventions" n'aurait aucun

caractère préjudiciable, toutes ces formes ayant la même validité d'actes internationaux et engageant les Parties Contractantes les unes aussi bien que les autres.

L'idée de la possibilité de conclure une Convention dans les questions persane et thibétaine devrait, semble-t-il, être absolument exclue.

Une Convention ne pourrait à la rigueur être conclue que par rapport à l'Afghanistan, vu la situation spéciale de ce pays vis-à-vis de l'Angleterre.

Il est à noter en outre que les bruits ayant trait à l'accord anglo-russe rencontrent un intérêt très vif en Asie; sa publication est attendue anxieusement tant en Perse qu'en Chine, et si cet accord revêt la forme solennelle d'une Convention cela froissera certainement les susceptibilités légitimes des cercles gouvernementaux persan et chinois, qui pourraient prendre ombrage de la manière dont l'Angleterre et la Russie disposent de leur pays, avec lesquels elles entretiennent d'égal à égal des relations diplomatiques directes. Au contraire, une déclaration, arrangement ou accord, constatant purement et simplement la ligne de conduite que les deux Etats s'engagent mutuellement à observer dorénavant par rapport aux questions persane et thibétaine, n'aurait pas le caractère d'une atteinte aux droits souverains de la Perse et de la Chine et n'entraînerait pas de suites défavorables au point de vue politique.

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 6 août, 1907.

No. 283.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

St. Petersburg, D. August 23, 1907, 9.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 163.)

R. August 24, 1907, 8 A.M.

Conventions and Agreements.

Minister for Foreign Affairs proposes that there should be a general preamble and a single ratification for all instruments. General preamble would be in following terms:—

“His Majesty the King, &c., and His Majesty the Emperor, &c., animated with a sincere desire to settle by mutual consent different questions touching the interests of their States in the Continent of Asia, have resolved to conclude arrangements destined to prevent all causes of misunderstanding between Russia and Great Britain in regard to said questions, and have named to that effect, as their respective Plenipotentiaries, namely,

who, after having communicated their full powers, &c., have agreed on following:—

“Then would come ‘Arrangement as to Persia’ with its special preamble and full text, then ‘Convention as to Afghanistan’ with its special preamble and full text, then ‘Declaration as to Thibet’ with its special preamble and full text and Arrangement as to Chumbi Valley. After these would come the following: ‘The present Agreements will be ratified, and ratifications exchanged at St. Petersburg, as soon as possible. In faith whereof the Plenipotentiaries have signed present Arrangements, &c.’”

By this means he considers he would avoid three ratifications, and the whole Arrangements form one instrument. He would like to know if you concur in this arrangement, and whether you would wish Arrangements as to Persia, Afghanistan, and Thibet signed also, or whether one signature at the end of the whole document after clause as to ratifications would suffice.

The idea seems a good one. Question of scientific missions in Thibet, and transfer of telegraph lines in Persia, would be settled by exchange of notes signed simultaneously.

I should be grateful for reply by Tuesday next.

MINUTES.

The Afghan Convention is not to come into force until the Amir has consented to its terms. I do not know whether this would be an objection to the three arrangements being included in a single instrument with one signature.

If we adopt the proposed general preamble I do not see how the special preambles of the Russian and Afghan agreement as they now stand can be included, as they w[oul]d contain many repetitions of the words used in the general preamble. E.g. "animated by a sincere desire" occurs in the Persian preamble and "being desirous of avoiding all cause of conflict etc" is almost the same as "to prevent all causes of misunderstanding etc" in the general preamble.

W. E.
Aug. 24.

The Afghanistan Treaty does not come into force until the Ameer consents but that does not affect this question.

The effect of adopting the Russian—for which the Treaty Dep[artmen]t can find no precedent—would be that all three agreements will stand or fall together and the only objection which I can see to this, is that if it is desired to introduce any changes into—say—the Persian agreement, it might open the door to proposals for changes in the other two agreements.

Mr. R. Ritchie and Mr. Morley are away but there will be time to discuss this on Monday and I have asked Sir C. Hardinge to write his views.

L. M.

I will discuss this on Monday.

E. G.
25.8.07.

The ratifying article should be called a "Convention" and should read "La présente Convention sera ratifiée."

E. G.

No. 284.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 482.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 24, 1907.

R. August 27, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit, herewith, the French texts of the several Agreements as agreed upon between Monsieur Isvolsky and myself, including the Annexes.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency has still to secure the approval of His Majesty the Emperor and the interested Ministries, but I do not consider that any modifications will be made. Should any such occur I would at once telegraph them to you: and I would be grateful if you would also inform me by telegraph of any alterations which you may wish inserted. Monsieur Isvolsky would be deeply sensible if your reply could be sent to me with as little delay as possible.

As regards the Afghan Convention I have no remarks to make. With respect to Persia it was found most difficult to devise a clause which would render it quite clear that the localities through which the respective lines ran lay within the respective spheres. I trust that the final clauses to Articles I and II will meet this difficulty to your satisfaction.

⁽¹⁾ [The French text of the Agreement is printed *infra*, pp. 618–20, Appendix I.]

An Annex, which provides for the transfer of the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Seistan telegraph lines, is also sent herewith: and it will be signed simultaneously with the Agreements. In accordance with the *Aide-mémoire* of the 12th of August, drawn up in London you expressed your approval of this arrangement provided that Khaf was the point from which the British control was to commence. Monsieur Isvolsky considers that if he and I simply sign this Annex it will be sufficient, without any interchange of Notes, and I venture to agree with him but would be grateful for your concurrence by telegraph.

I have informed Monsieur Isvolsky that, though it does not form part of our agreements, we expect to receive an assurance from the Russian Government that they will adopt a friendly attitude towards the prolongation of some British telegraph concessions, and I reminded him of our communication that we would be prepared to concede the rights we possess over the Tehran-Khanikin line. He said that he would send me a communication assenting to this in principle, but that the Russian Government were awaiting information as to the financial position &c of the Tehran-Khanikin line and could not go further than the above at present. I should be glad to be informed if His Majesty's Government would be satisfied with this. I should be sorry to delay signature of the Conventions in regard to a matter outside their scope. The Russian Government will of course write me a Note in reply to mine regarding scientific missions in Thibet. Monsieur Isvolsky, on second thoughts, considers that it would be best to describe the agreement as to Thibet as an "arrangement" and not as a "Declaration" so as to bring it into conformity with that respecting Persia.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 285.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/325.

Foreign Office, August 27, 1907.

Tel. (No. 165.)

D. 6.30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 163 and despatch 432 received.⁽¹⁾ We agree to one general Preamble and one ratification, but in that case there must be one instrument styled a convention since it includes one of that category and two agreements. The Ratifying article should therefore run:—"La présente Convention sera ratifiée etc." Russian draft, as worded, implies separate ratifications for each, which is what they wish to avoid.

In sixth line of general Preamble substitute "Russia and Gr[ea]t Britain" for "Their States" and in eighth line substitute "Them" for "Russia and Gr[ea]t Britain."

And in Article III of Persian agreement, last paragraph we prefer "dans les limites" to "en deçà."

We do not attach great importance to these amendments.

It is of course understood that in our copy of Instrument Great Britain should throughout be mentioned before Russia.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 301-3, Nos. 283-4.]

No. 286.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, August 28, 1907.*

F.O. 371/325.

D. 2:35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 172.)

R. 4 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 165.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] agrees to insert in ratifying articles the words "the present convention will be ratified etc."

As to amendments in general preamble of 6th and 8th lines he pointed out that "Them" (with capital T) would indicate sovereigns and it could not be said that any misunderstandings could exist between the sovereigns. He pressed for the retention of Russian text and I agreed as you mention you do not attach great importance to the matter.

As to Article III of Persian agreement he is anxious as we are to make meaning quite clear but in french "dans les limites des lignes" would not be clear. He suggests "dans les régions" designated in Article I and Article II. In these Articles the word "regions" is used and there would then be no doubt that concessions in our respective zones are maintained. I hope you will agree. I have no doubt we shall sign on Saturday but cannot tell till this evening which alternative council will accept. Council is to be held this afternoon.

No. 287.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/325.

Tel. (No. 168.)

*Foreign Office, August 28, 1907.*Your telegram 172.⁽¹⁾

We agree.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 288.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, August 30, 1907.

I cannot refrain, on the eve of the signature of the Convention, from writing a line to thank you most sincerely for the kind support you have given me throughout these negotiations, and for the considerate manner in which you have always acted towards me. Your guidance and advice have been invaluable.

I do not think that the opponents can knock many holes in the Convention: and if it be loyally executed on both sides, a great improvement should come over our relations with Russia. I wish that M. Iswolsky would steel his heart and stiffen his back against press criticisms. At present he is over anxious to propitiate the papers—especially the "Novoe Vremya." He has acted most loyally to us throughout, and I have not detected the slightest attempt to take an unfair advantage. The game has been played most fairly. I was pleased that you sent him a kindly message. He was much gratified. I have written a letter to Harding which doubtless he will send on to you.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 88.]

CHAPTER XXVI.

THIBET.

I.—THE BRITISH EXPEDITION TO THIBET, 1903-1904.

[*ED. NOTE.*—Aggression and unneighbourly conduct on the part of the Thibetans on the borders of Sikkim led to the Convention between Great Britain and China signed at Calcutta on March 17, 1890. The first three Articles defined the boundary between Sikkim and Thibet, recognised Sikkim as a British protectorate, and bound the signatories to prevent acts of aggression from their respective sides of the frontier. Articles IV–VII (*A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, (*Cd.* 1920), p. 793) were as follows:—

- IV. The question of providing increased facilities for trade across the Sikkim–Thibet frontier will hereafter be discussed with a view to a mutually satisfactory arrangement by the High Contracting Powers.
- V. The question of pasturage on the Sikkim side of the frontier is reserved for further examination and future adjustment.
- VI. The High Contracting Powers reserve for discussion and arrangement the method in which official communications between the British authorities in India and the authorities in Thibet shall be conducted.
- VII. Two Joint-Commissioners shall, within six months from the ratification of this Convention, be appointed, one by the British Government in India, the other by the Chinese Resident in Thibet. The said Commissioners shall meet and discuss the questions which by the last three preceding Articles have been reserved.

The reserved questions were settled by Regulations regarding Trade, Communication and Pasturage on the Sikkim–Thibet frontier, signed on December 5, 1893, by British–Chinese Joint Commissioners. (Text in *A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, pp. 808–9.) The relations of the Government of India with Thibet, which were in no way improved by the Convention, are described in *A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, (*Cd.* 1920 and *Cd.* 2054), and (1905), LVIII, (*Cd.* 2370). Trade was impeded, letters from the Viceroy were unanswered, and Russian intrigues were suspected. In a despatch dated January 8, 1903, the Government of India argued that British interests were “seriously imperilled . . . by the absolute breakdown of the Treaty arrangements hitherto made through the medium of China, by the obstructive inertia of the Tibetans themselves, and still more by arrangements freshly concluded with another Great Power to our detriment,” and urged the despatch of an armed commercial mission to Lhasa and the appointment of a Resident.⁽¹⁾ On February 27, 1903, the British Government replied that they could not sanction the scheme till the Russian Government had further defined its policy. On April 8 the Russian Ambassador informed Lord Lansdowne that Russia had made no Convention regarding Thibet and had no intention of sending agents or Missions there. A meeting of Chinese, Thibetan and Indian Representatives at Khamjong (the first post across the Thibetan frontier) was authorised on April 29, and Colonel Younghusband was selected as British Commissioner. The Thibetan delegates, however, declined to negotiate and the arrival of the Chinese Amban appeared uncertain. In these circumstances an advance to Gyantse was sanctioned in the following telegram:—

The Secretary of State for India to the Government of India.⁽²⁾

F.O. China 1747.
Tel.

Foreign Office, November 6, 1903.

Foreign Secret. Tibet. His Majesty's Government feel that it would be impossible not to take action in face of the recent conduct of the Tibetans. They therefore sanction the advance of the mission to Gyantse; but they are clearly of opinion that this step should be taken purely for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction, that it should not be allowed to lead to occupation, or any form of permanent intervention in Thibetan affairs, and that it should withdraw as soon as reparation is obtained. They consider the action proposed necessary, but the question of enforcing trade facilities must be considered in reference to the above decision, and His Majesty's Government are not prepared to establish a permanent mission in Thibet.]

(1) [*A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, (*Cd.* 1920), p. 941.]

(2) [Paraphrased in *A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, (*Cd.* 1920), p. 1080.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.⁽¹⁾

F.O. China 1747.

(No. 330.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 17, 1903.

The Russian Ambassador paid me a visit to-day,⁽²⁾ and at once spoke in earnest terms of the effect which had been created in Russia by the announcement that Major Younghusband's force was about to advance into Thibet. He was instructed to remind me of the statement which he had made to me on April 8 as to the manner in which the Russian Government regarded the Tibetan question. They could not help feeling that the invasion of Tibetan territory by a British force was calculated to involve a grave disturbance of the Central Asian situation, and it was most unfortunate that at the present moment when we⁽³⁾ were about to enter into an amicable discussion of our relations at the various points where British and Russian interests were in contact, an event of this kind so calculated to create mistrust on the part of Russia should have occurred. Count Benckendorff wished me however to understand that the despatch which he had received had crossed, and was therefore not an answer to the telegram in which he had communicated the statement which I had made to him on the 7th instant as to the position of affairs in Thibet, and the steps which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had determined to take.

I expressed my great surprise at the excitement which the announcement seemed to have created. I had, I said, already pointed out to His Excellency that Tibet was on the one hand in close geographical connection with India, and, on the other, far remote from any of Russia's Asiatic possessions. Our interest in Tibetan affairs was therefore wholly different from any which Russia could have in them. I reminded Count Benckendorff that I had already explained to him that we had received the greatest provocation at the hands of the Tibetans who had not only failed to fulfil their Treaty obligations but had virtually refused to negotiate with us. They had even gone the length of returning the letters which we had addressed to the authorities at Lhasa, and more lately they had seized and, as we believed, barbarously put to death two British subjects, they had also carried off the transport animals which had been provided for the use of the Commission. We had always been reluctant to entangle ourselves in quarrels with the Thibetans, but our forbearance had, I was afraid, led them to believe that we could be ill-treated with impunity. I was firmly convinced that the Russian Government would not have shown as much patience as we had and that they would have been at Lhasa by this time.

I felt bound to add that it seemed to me beyond measure strange that these protests should be made by the Government of a Power which had all over the world never hesitated to encroach upon its neighbours when the circumstances seemed to require it. If the Russian Government had a right to complain of us for taking steps in order to obtain reparation from the Tibetans by advancing into Tibetan territory what kind of language should we not be entitled to use in regard to Russian encroachments in Manchuria, Turkestan, Persia (and elsewhere).

Count Benckendorff (apparently found some difficulty in offering a rejoinder: he) asked me whether I had any objection to his saying that we had approved of the advance into Tibetan territory with reluctance and only because circumstances had made it inevitable and that our sole object was to obtain satisfaction for the affronts which we had received from the Tibetans.

⁽¹⁾ [Quoted in *A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, (Cd. 1920), pp. 1084-5. The passages placed in round brackets are there omitted.]

⁽²⁾ [The report of this conversation should be compared with that given of an important interview on November 7, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, pp. 222-4, No. 258.]

⁽³⁾ [In the published version this reads: "when the Russian Government were, as I was aware, disposed to enter into . . ."]

I said that I had no objection to his making such a statement. (He endeavoured to induce me to authorize him to say that we had no intention of bringing about an alteration of the *status quo* but I objected to committing myself to a statement so vague and liable to misrepresentation, and I insisted upon our absolute right to do what we were doing. . . .)(⁴)

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

(⁴) [For the latter part of this despatch, which does not deal with Thibet, v. *supra*, ch. XXV, pp. 183-4, No. 181 (a).]

No. 290.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott.

F.O. China 1748.

(No. 166.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 13, 1904.

In the course of my conversation with the Russian Amb[assado]r this afternoon, His Excellency referred to our Tibetan expedition. The news of our collision with the Tibetans had reached Count Lamsdorff, but did not seem to him to alter the situation. What really mattered in his opinion was the results which might follow from Colonel Younghusband's Mission. Count Benckendorff asked whether I would authorize him to repeat the statements which I had made to him on a former occasion upon this subject. I replied that I had no objection to his saying that in my view nothing had happened to modify the objects with which we had originally determined to send Colonel Younghusband's Mission into Tibetan territory.⁽¹⁾

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

(¹) [Published in *A. & P.* (1905), LVIII, (Cd. 2370), p. 459. Cd. 2370 continues the correspondence from April 13 until December 1904.]

No. 291.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. Russia 1677.

(No. 190.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 10, 1904.

The Russian Ambassador communicated to me to-day the substance of a telegram which he had just received from Count Lamsdorff.

It was to the following effect:—

“The Imperial Cabinet was glad to note the intention of the British Government to establish relations on a basis of mutual confidence between Russia and Great Britain. This intention would be manifested in a specially valuable manner by the communication of a Memorandum respecting the affairs of Thibet, such as I had mentioned to Count Benckendorff. As soon as the Imperial Government had received the Memorandum in question, they were prepared on their side to declare formally that they would abstain from all opposition to the Khedivial Decree of which the draft is annexed to the Anglo-French Agreement of the 8th April.”

[16942]

I was obliged, owing to an engagement in the House of Lords, to leave his Excellency immediately after he had communicated this statement. I saw him, however, later in the afternoon, and told him that I saw no reason why we should not arrive at an understanding upon the basis of his communication. With this object I gave him the following outline of the assurance which I should be prepared to give him in regard to our Thibetan policy, provided he were able to give me an equally satisfactory assurance with regard to Egypt.

In order to avoid all risk of misunderstanding, I gave his Excellency a Memorandum, which ran as follows:—

“In their telegram to the Government of India of the 6th November, 1903,⁽¹⁾ His Majesty's Government, in sanctioning the advance of Colonel Young-husband's Mission to Gyantse, announced that they were clearly of opinion that this step should not be allowed to lead to the occupation of Thibet or to permanent intervention in Thibetan affairs. They stated that the advance was to be made for the sole purpose of obtaining satisfaction, and that, as soon as reparation had been obtained, withdrawal would be effected. They added that they were not prepared to establish a permanent Mission in Thibet, and that the question of enforcing trade facilities in that country was to be considered in the light of the decision conveyed in the telegram.

“Your Excellency has inquired whether the opposition which has been offered to the Mission by the Thibetans has in any way modified the policy thus described.

“I am able to tell you, in reply, that His Majesty's Government still adhere to it; though it is obvious that their action must to some extent depend upon the conduct of the Thibetans themselves, and that His Majesty's Government cannot undertake that they will not depart in any eventuality from the policy which now commends itself to them. They desire, however, to state in the most emphatic terms that so long as no other Power endeavours to intervene in the affairs of Thibet, they will not attempt either to annex it, to establish a Protectorate over it, or in any way to control its internal administration.”

I told his Excellency that if I gave him an assurance in these terms I should expect him to give me an assurance that Russia would offer no opposition to us in Egypt. His Excellency said that he presumed that I meant that Russia should say to us what France had already said. I replied that that was exactly my idea, and I showed his Excellency Article 1 of the Declaration respecting Egypt and Morocco, and suggested that the Russian Government should repeat what had been said on the part of the French Government in the second paragraph of that Article. Count Benckendorff pointed out that this paragraph went somewhat further than anything which I had as yet said to him on the subject, for France had not only given her adhesion to the Khedivial Decree, but had declared that she would not obstruct our action by asking that a limit of time should be fixed for the British occupation, or in any other manner. His Excellency thought that the Russian Government might object to a wider pledge of this description, particularly as nothing was said of such a pledge in the Circular which we had sent to the Powers. That Circular had referred only to the Khedivial Decree. I pointed out to his Excellency that the assurance which I had just offered to him conditionally with regard to Thibet dealt not only with the present situation, but with remoter eventualities in a manner which must be highly satisfactory to the Russian Government, and I thought it only fair that if the concluding paragraph of our assurance was to stand, the assurance of the Russian Government should be on all fours with that which we had received from the French Republic. His Excellency

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 305, *Ed. note.*]

promised that he would at once communicate what had passed between us to the Russian Government.

I told his Excellency in the course of our conversation that, owing to the aggressiveness and obstinacy of the Thibetans, His Majesty's Government had authorized the Government of India to advance to Lhasa, unless within a specified time the Thibetans came to terms with us at Gyantse. This resolve on our part did not, however, denote any new departure so far as the principles of our policy were concerned.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

No. 292.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. China 1749.

(No. 274.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. May 30, 1904.

R. June 7, 1904.

I have the honour to report that Monsieur Bompard, the French Ambassador, called on me today and informed me that at an audience which he had had with the Emperor last week His Majesty had talked to him of the negotiations in progress in London respecting Thibet, and had complained of the ambiguity of the penultimate sentence of the memorandum which Your Lordship had proposed to give to Count Benckendorff. Monsieur Bompard added that he had not seen the text of the memorandum in question, but that, with a view to encouraging more friendly relations with the Russian Government, and to removing the apparent distrust of the intentions of His Majesty's Government, with which the Emperor was evidently inspired, it would be very desirable to find some turn of phrase which might remove the suspicions of the Russian Government without in any way compromising the policy of His Majesty's Government. He laid stress on the fact that it was a very unusual proceeding on the part of the Emperor to discuss with an Ambassador a question relating to a third country and that it was a proof of the impression which it had made on His Majesty.

I showed to Monsieur Bompard the text of the memorandum contained in Your Lordship's despatch No. 190 of the 10th instant,⁽¹⁾ and I explained to him that it was solely from honesty of purpose that Your Lordship had inserted in it a reserve that gave His Majesty's Government a certain liberty of action in the event of circumstances unknown at present, necessitating in the future any modification of their present policy, but that I considered that the Russian Government had every reason to be satisfied with the very emphatic assurance contained in the last sentence of the memorandum.

Monsieur Bompard, while fully recognising the loyalty of the motives which had inspired Your Lordship in making the reserve to which objection is taken, again impressed upon me the good effect which would be produced here by a satisfactory solution of this question, and I quite agree with him in this view, especially at this moment when the news of the recent defeat of the Russian troops at Kinchau has caused such disappointment and bitter humiliation. If it is possible by the turn of a phrase or the omission of the sentence to satisfy the Russian Government without compromising the policy of His Majesty's Government, I have no doubt that this course will already have been followed by Your Lordship before this despatch reaches your hands.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

MINUTE.

Sir C. Hardinge was told in our tel[egram] of June 3⁽²⁾ that in a note to the Russian Amb[assado]r the assurances given on May 10 had been repeated : also that it had been explained to H[is] E[xcellency] that the reservation was indispensable.

W. L.
L.

(²) [*v. infra*, No. 293, note (¹).]

No. 293.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.(¹)

F.O. China 1749.

(No. 224 A.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 2, 1904.

I addressed to Count Benckendorff to-day in writing a communication to the following effect in regard to Thibet, H[is] E[xcellency] having upon several occasions expressed a hope that our policy towards that country would not be altered by recent events.

“Your Excellency has enquired in the course of recent conversations whether the opposition which has been offered to the British Mission to Tibet has in any way modified the policy of His Majesty’s Government in regard to that country as described in their telegram to the Government of India of the 6th of November, 1903.⁽²⁾”

“H[is] M[ajesty’s] Gov[ernmen]t announced in that telegram that in sanctioning the advance of Col[onel] Younghusband’s Mission to Gyantse, they were clearly of opinion that this step should not be allowed to lead to the occupation of Tibet or to permanent intervention in Tibetan affairs. They stated that the advance was to be made for the sole purpose of obtaining satisfaction and that, as soon as reparation had been obtained, withdrawal would be effected. They added that they were not prepared to establish a permanent mission in Tibet, and that the question of enforcing trade facilities in that country was to be considered in the light of the decision conveyed in the telegram.

“I am now able to tell you that H[is] M[ajesty’s] Gov[ernmen]t still adhere to the policy thus described, though it is obvious that their action must to some extent depend upon the conduct of the Tibetans themselves, and that H[is] M[ajesty’s] Gov[ernmen]t cannot undertake that they will not depart in any eventuality from the policy which now commends itself to them. They desire however to state in the most emphatic terms that, so long as no other Power endeavours to intervene in the affairs of Tibet, they will not attempt either to annex it, to establish a protectorate over it, or in any way to control its internal administration.”

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE.]

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

(¹) [The substance of this despatch is given in Tel. No. 139 of June 3, 1904, to Sir C. Hardinge (F.O. China, 1749).]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 305, *Ed. note.*]

No. 294.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. China 1749.

Tel. (Unnumbered.)

St. Petersburg, June 14, 1904.

D. 7.39 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

Austrian Ambassador was informed by Minister for Foreign Affairs on 10th June that he is now quite satisfied with assurances given by your Lordship respecting Thibet, and convinced of the loyal policy of His Majesty's Government in Macedonia.

No. 295.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. China 1749.

(No. 304.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. June 20, 1904.

R. June 27, 1904.

In the course of conversation with Count Lamsdorff the day before yesterday I alluded to the question of Thibet. I reminded him that he had told me on more than one occasion that the British expedition to Thibet had made a very deep and disturbing impression on public opinion in Russia, and I asked whether in view of the satisfactory assurances which had been given by Your Lordship to Count Benckendorff it would not be possible to calm any agitation that may still possibly exist by communicating in some form or other to the Press the substance of Your Lordship's memorandum.

His Excellency replied that the idea was a good one and that he would consider whether something in that sense might not be done. He expressed himself as satisfied with Your Lordship's clear and concise declarations as to British policy in Thibet and trusted that His Majesty's Government paid no more attention to the reported existence of a convention between Russia and Thibet. He remembered very well the arrival of the Thibetan mission at Yalta and he could assure me that no political questions were discussed, the relations between Russia and Thibet being of a purely religious nature due solely to the large number of Russian Buriats who regarded the Dalai Lama as their Pope.

I remarked that it was not surprising that suspicions should have been raised in India and elsewhere by the despatch of a mission to Russia from Thibet and by the reported presence and influence of Monsieur Dorjief at Lhasa, but that I felt sure that His Majesty's Government accepted with confidence the official assurances given by Count Benckendorff on the 8th of April 1903⁽²⁾ that the Russian Government had concluded no Convention relating to Thibet with Thibet, China or any other Power and that the Russian Government had no Agents there nor any intention of sending an Agent or a Mission to Lhasa.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE.

I am not sure that this was a very wise proposal on Sir C. Hardinge's part, but he has made it and the Russian Gov[ernmen]t is free to publish the declar[atio]n if they think fit.

L.

⁽¹⁾ [Part printed A. & P. (1905), LVIII, (Cd. 2370), p. 478.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 305, Ed. note.]

Government of India to Colonel Younghusband.⁽¹⁾—(Repeated to Secretary of State for India.)⁽²⁾

F.O. China 1750.

Tel. Foreign. Secret.

Simla, June 26, 1904.

R. 10·5 P.M.

We are not yet in a position to send final instructions as to terms which should be demanded when negotiations begin, but are posting to-day copy of despatch to Secretary of State discussing the question. Points on which His Majesty's Government have so far authorised negotiations are stated in telegrams from Secretary of State dated 6th November⁽³⁾ and 30th November, 1903. Despatch containing following proposals:—

- (1.) We have explained that it may be necessary to post Resident at Lhasa, but on this point final opinion reserved pending receipt of your views after arrival at Lhasa. Failing this, it has been suggested that Agent be posted at Gyantse with right of proceeding to Lhasa, as occasion may require, to discuss matters with Amban or Tibetan Officials. Latter arrangement would be accompanied by reservation of right to post Agent at Lhasa should Tibetan Government hereafter abandon attitude of isolation from European Powers;
- (2.) That we require from Tibetans and Chinese formal recognition of exclusive (British ?) political influence, and engagements not to admit to Tibet representatives of, not to cede any portion of Tibetan territory to, and not to enter into relations about Tibet with, any foreign Power without previous British consent;
- (3.) That we demand indemnities from both Tibetans and Chinese. We have not discussed amount in Despatch, but think it should be at rate of 100,000*l.* for every month from date of attack on Mission at Gyantse on 4th May until one month after signature of Convention, one month's instalment to be paid down, and guarantee taken for future payment;
- (4.) That Chumbi be occupied for requisite period as security for payment of indemnity and fulfilment of treaty;
- (5.) That all fortified positions which might impede communication between Lhasa and frontier be razed, and no arms be imported or manufactured without British permission;
- (6.) That trade marts be established at (a) Gyantse, (b) Shigatse, (c) Lhasa, in event of Agent being posted there, (d) at Gartok in Western Tibet, and (e) at other places, as may hereafter be found suitable in Eastern Tibet;
- (7.) That details, including trade regulations, terms of Customs Duties, mining rights, and Sikkim and Garhwal boundary settlements stand over till after discussion with Tibetans.

These demands, you should clearly understand, have not yet been approved by His Majesty's Government, and you should confine yourself to ascertaining how they are likely to be regarded without committing Government to them. If you have any suggestions to offer as to other ways of securing reparation and satisfaction, the Government of India will be glad to learn them and to receive your mature opinion on policy recommended in draft despatch.

⁽¹⁾ [A paraphrased version is published in *A. & P.* (1905), LVIII. (Cd. 2370), p. 480.]

⁽²⁾ [Communicated to the Foreign Office, June 27, 1904.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 305, *Ed. note.*]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand.

F.O. China 1750.

(No. 126 A.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 29, 1904.

The American Ambassador said a few words to me today on the subject of the situation which had arisen in Thibet. He assumed that we still regarded Thibet as a part of the Chinese Dominions, and that we did not desire to alter the status of the country in that respect. I said that His Excellency's supposition was correct, and that we had indeed from the first endeavoured to work through the Chinese Government, although unfortunately without much success.

In reply to a further question from His Excellency, I told him that the keynote of our policy was sounded in the telegram sent by the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy on November 6th 1903, and published in the Thibetan Bluebook.⁽¹⁾ The conduct of the Thibetans had, as His Excellency was aware, obliged us to advance to Lhasa, and I could not take upon myself to say what terms it would be necessary for us to impose upon the Thibetans or how soon it would be possible for us to withdraw the Mission. The general principles of our policy remained however unaffected by these events.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 305, *Ed. note*. The "Blue Book" is *A. & P.* (1904), LXVII, (*Cd.* 1920), and the document cited is on p. 1080.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On June 30, 1904, the Government of India sent a long despatch to the Secretary of State for India in Council "regarding the conditions of the settlement of our relations with Tibet." The despatch was forwarded to the Foreign Office for their information, and a copy is preserved in F.O. China 1750. A large part of it was subsequently published in *A. & P.* (1905), LVIII, (*Cd.* 2370), pp. 491-7. The first ten paragraphs of this document are of the most general interest. Paragraphs 1-3 were printed substantially in full, and deal with the mission to Thibet of Colonel (Sir Francis) Younghusband, and the desirability of establishing a British Representative at Lhasa. Paragraph 4 continues the discussion of the latter subject, and the first part of it may be quoted here in full, as it contains some references of importance to Russian policy in that region.

4. "It is evident that, if our objects are not to be frustrated from the outset, the trade arrangements at the marts which we propose to secure must be supervised by a British officer. Clause 1 of the Trade Regulations of 1893 permitted the posting of such an official at the place then selected, and we now regard it as a matter for regret that no use was ever made of this provision. But the need for such an appointment is based also on considerations of a wider nature. It is now more than a year since we received and reported circumstantial rumours of Russian Agreements with or about Tibet. We believe that these reports were by no means groundless. But when confronted with a demand for a categorical statement of their intentions, the Russian Government, unprepared at once to assert the position they desired, declared after long delay and some hesitation through their Ambassador that there existed "no Convention about Tibet, either with Tibet itself, or with China, or with any one else, nor had the Russian Government any Agents in that country, or any intention of sending Agents or Missions there." Their policy, it was added, "ne viserait le Tibet en aucun cas." On the strength of these explicit disclaimers, His Majesty's Government announced in May 1903 that they were unable to approve a suggestion that we should endeavour to arrange for the permanent location of a Political Agent in Tibet. "In the opinion of His Majesty's Government," it was explained, "the responsibilities and complications which such a political outpost might entail outweigh any advantage to be derived from it under the conditions now known to prevail, and the assurances recently received by the Foreign Office remove the apprehensions which were previously entertained of a development of political influence by Russia in that country.

We do not wish to belittle the practical and immediate value of these disclaimers. We are unable, however, to share the view of His Majesty's Government that Count Benckendorff's declaration removes all ground for apprehension of the development of Russian political influence in these regions. We will not here reiterate the proofs which we hold undoubtedly to exist of a steady endeavour on the part of Russia to cultivate political influence by unofficial means."

The rest of this section continues this subject in greater detail, and is of less general interest,

Paragraphs 5-7 deal with the desirability of obtaining "practical guarantees" for carrying out any convention that may be concluded. A substantial part of these sections is printed in the Parliamentary Paper.

Paragraphs 8-9 deal further with the reasons which had prevented the appointment of a representative in Thibet.

This part of the despatch closes with paragraph 10 which contains the following statement: "But whether or not a British Agent is established in Tibet, we consider that recent events justify our requiring from the Tibetans and from the Chinese Government a formal recognition of our exclusive political influence in Tibet, and an engagement that they will not admit to Tibet the representative of, that they will cede no portion of Tibetan territory to, and that they will enter into no relations regarding Tibet with, any other foreign Power, without the previous consent of the British Government." (*A. & P.* (1905), LVIII, (Cd. 2370), p. 496.) Much of the remainder of the despatch is already published, and it is not of sufficient importance to require detailed notice here.]

No. 298.

*Convention between Great Britain and Thibet. Signed at Lhasa on
September 7, 1904.*

Convention between Great Britain and Thibet.

Whereas doubts and difficulties have arisen as to the meaning and validity of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and the Trade Regulations of 1893, and as to the liabilities of the Tibetan Government under these agreements; and whereas recent occurrences have tended towards a disturbance of the relations of friendship and good understanding which have existed between the British Government and the Government of Tibet; and whereas it is desirable to restore peace and amicable relations, and to resolve and determine the doubts and difficulties as aforesaid, the said Governments have resolved to conclude a Convention with these objects, and the following articles have been agreed upon by Colonel F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., in virtue of full powers vested in him by His Britannic Majesty's Government and on behalf of that said Government, and Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen, and Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche, and the Representatives of the Council, of the three monasteries Se-ra, Dre-pung, and Ga-den, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly, on behalf of the Government of Tibet.

I.

The Government of Tibet engages to respect the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and to recognise the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet as defined in Article I of the said Convention, and to erect boundary pillars accordingly.

II.

The Tibetan Government undertakes to open forthwith trade marts to which all British and Tibetan subjects shall have free right of access at Gyantse and Gartok, as well as at Yatung.

The Regulations applicable to the trade mart at Yatung, under the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of 1893, shall, subject to such amendments as may hereafter be agreed upon by common consent between the British and Tibetan Governments, apply to the marts above mentioned.

In addition to establishing trade marts at the places mentioned, the Tibetan Government undertakes to place no restrictions on the trade by existing routes and

to consider the question of establishing fresh trade marts under similar conditions if development of trade requires it.

III.

The question of the amendment of the Regulations of 1893 is reserved for separate consideration, and the Tibetan Government undertakes to appoint fully authorised delegates to negotiate with representatives of the British Government as to the details of the amendments required.

IV.

The Tibetan Government undertakes to levy no dues of any kind other than those provided for in the tariff to be mutually agreed upon.

V.

The Tibetan Government undertakes to keep the roads to Gyantse and Gartok from the frontier clear of all obstruction and in a state of repair suited to the needs of the trade, and to establish at Yatung, Gyantse, and Gartok, and at each of the other trade marts that may hereafter be established, a Tibetan Agent who shall receive from the British Agent appointed to watch over British trade at the marts in question any letter which the latter may desire to send to the Tibetan or to the Chinese authorities. The Tibetan Agent shall also be responsible for the due delivery of such communications and for the transmission of replies.

VI.

As an indemnity to the British Government for the expense incurred in the despatch of armed troops to Lhasa to exact reparation for breaches of treaty obligations and for the insults offered to and attacks upon the British Commissioner and his following and escort, the Tibetan Government engages to pay a sum of £ Five hundred thousand—equivalent to Rupees seventy-five lakhs—to the British Government.

The indemnity shall be payable at such place as the British Government may from time to time after due notice indicate whether in Tibet or in the British districts of Darjeeling or Jalpiguri, in seventy-five annual instalments of Rupees one lakh each on the 1st January in each year, beginning from the 1st January 1906.

VII.

As security for the payment of the above-mentioned indemnity, and for the fulfilment of the provisions relative to trade marts specified in Articles II, III, IV, and V, the British Government shall continue to occupy the Chumbi valley until the indemnity has been paid and until the trade marts have been effectively opened for three years, whichever date may be the later.

VIII.

The Tibetan Government agrees to raze all forts and fortifications and remove all armaments which might impede the course of free communication between the British frontier and the towns of Gyantse and Lhasa.

IX.

The Government of Tibet engages that, without the previous consent of the British Government,—

- (a.) no portion of Tibetan territory shall be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise given for occupation, to any Foreign Power;
- (b.) no such Power shall be permitted to intervene in Tibetan affairs;
- (c.) no Representatives or Agents of any Foreign Power shall be admitted to Tibet;
- (d.) no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights, shall be granted to any Foreign Power, or the subject of any Foreign Power. In the event of consent to such concessions being granted, similar or equivalent concessions shall be granted to the British Government;
- (e.) no Tibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to any Foreign Power, or the subject of any Foreign Power.

X.

In witness whereof the negotiators have signed the same, and affixed thereunto the seals of their arms.

Done in quintuplicate at Lhasa this 7th day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and four, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the 27th day of the seventh month of the Wood Dragon year.

F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND, *Colonel,*
British Commissioner.

Tibet Frontier Commission.
(Seal of British Commissioner.)

(Seal of the Dalai Lama affixed by the
Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche.)

(Seal of
Council.)

(Seal of the
Drepung
Monastery.)

(Seal of
Sera
Monastery.)

(Seal of
Gaden
Monastery.)

(Seal of
National
Assembly.)

In proceeding to the signature of the Convention, dated this day, the representatives of Great Britain and Tibet declare that the English text shall be binding.

F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND, *Colonel,*
British Commissioner.

Tibet Frontier Commission.
(Seal of British Commissioner.)

(Seal of the Dalai Lama affixed by the
Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche.)

(Seal of
Council.)

(Seal of the
Drepung
Monastery.)

(Seal of
Sera
Monastery.)

(Seal of
Gaden
Monastery.)

(Seal of
National
Assembly.)

AMPTHILL,
Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

This Convention was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Simla on the eleventh day of November, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and four.

S. M. FRASER,
Secretary to the Government of India,
Foreign Department.

Declaration signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and appended to the ratified Convention of 7th September 1904.

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, having ratified the Convention which was concluded at Lhasa on 7th September 1904 by Colonel Younghusband, C.I.E., British Commissioner for Tibet Frontier Matters, on behalf of His Britannic Majesty's Government; and by Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen, the Gaden Ti-Rimpochi, and the representatives of the Council, of the three monasteries Sera, Drepung, and Gaden, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly, on behalf of the Government of Tibet, is pleased to direct as an act of grace that the sum of money which the Tibetan Government have bound themselves under the terms of Article VI of the said Convention to pay to His Majesty's Government as an indemnity for the expenses incurred by the latter in connection with the despatch of armed forces to Lhasa, be reduced from Rs. 75,00,000 to Rs. 25,00,000; and to declare that the British occupation of the Chumbi valley shall cease after the due payment of three annual instalments of the said indemnity as fixed by the said Article, provided, however, that the trade marts as stipulated in Article II of the Convention shall have been effectively opened for three years as provided in Article VI of the Convention; and that, in the meantime, the Tibetans shall have faithfully complied with the terms of the said Convention in all other respects.

AMPTHILL,

Viceroy and Governor General of India.

This declaration was signed by the Viceroy and Governor General of India in Council at Simla on the eleventh day of November, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and four.

S. M. FRASER,

*Secretary to the Government of India,⁽¹⁾
Foreign Department.*

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 98 (1909), pp. 148-51, and in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVI. (*Cd.* 3088), pp. 122-6. The text was laid before both Houses of Parliament in August 1906, though the Blue Book, *Cd.* 2370, recounting events, was published in 1905, and includes a copy of the text of the Convention, *A. & P.* (1905), LVIII, (*Cd.* 2370), pp. 548-50. The text printed above is that of the British original preserved in the Foreign Office.]

No. 299.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. China 1752.

(No. 471.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. September 23, 1904.

R. September 26, 1904.

Count Lamsdorff mentioned to me yesterday, though expressly stating that he spoke unofficially, that the publication in the "Times" of the Treaty which His Majesty's Government had concluded with Tibet had made a generally bad impression, since its terms were inconsistent with the assurances contained in the memorandum given to Count Benckendorff⁽¹⁾ and constituted a virtual protectorate over Tibet. To my remark that it was quite impossible to satisfy people in Russia who were always predisposed to be discontented however sincere or honest England might be in her actions, he replied that it was not so much in Russia as from abroad that he had received this impression. He understood that His Majesty's Government had imposed an indemnity which it would be impossible for the Tibetans to pay, and that the occupation of the Chumbi valley would thus be

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 310, No. 293.]

indefinitely prolonged. Particular exception was taken to Article 9 by which no commercial concessions of any kind were to be granted to foreigners in Tibet without the consent of Great Britain, and such a clause could only be regarded as an interference in internal affairs and as a virtual protectorate. Count Lamsdorff at the same time stated that he had not yet had time to study the question.

I told Count Lamsdorff that I had not yet received from Your Lordship the text of the Treaty and was not therefore in a position to express an opinion, but that it seemed to me absurd to talk of a Protectorate of Tibet when there would not be a single political Agent in the country nor any British troops except for the temporary presence of small detachments in a very distant corner of the country. The indemnity of half a million sterling could hardly be smaller and if the Tibetans observed their other Treaty obligations I did not imagine that His Majesty's Government would be hard on them. As for foreign concessions, whether commercial or otherwise, in Tibet, His Majesty's Government fully realised the danger, from past experience in other semi-civilized and barbarous states, of not hermetically closing the door to them, and that such a measure was only in accordance with Your Lordship's declaration to Count Benckendorff of the determination of His Majesty's Government to oppose the intervention of any Foreign Power in Tibet. I added that it was useless to prolong the discussion of a Treaty of which neither of us knew the authentic text.

The French Ambassador alluded to this question in conversation with me this morning and stated that it was article IX of the text of the Treaty telegraphed from Peking which had specially irritated Russian public opinion and that from the Russian point of view the test of whether the present Treaty establishes a protectorate over Tibet will be decided according to whether that country is to be reserved to British enterprise to the exclusion of foreigners, or whether concessions are to be equally denied to British subjects.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 300.

Sir E. Satow to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Peking, September 23, 1904

F.O. China 1752.

D. 7·10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 206.)

R. 8 P.M.

Your telegram No. 138⁽¹⁾: Thibet negotiations.

I saw Prince Ching 23rd September. With him was Wu.

Prince says that, since telegram quoted in Government of India's telegram 18th September was sent, Amban has reported receipt of two letters from Colonel Younghusband which completely remove from the mind of Chinese Government all impression that Chinese suzerainty (is) diminished.

Had these been known of at the time they would not have dispatched their telegram. They do not object to Convention being signed with the Thibetans, but Article IX, which they see is intended as a safeguard against Russia, creates difficulties for them as infringing the most-favoured-nation rights of other Powers. (I discern German Minister's cloven hoof in this.)

They are ready to let Convention stand, as it is but desire to have the assurances contained in Colonel Younghusband's two letters embodied in Adhesion Agreement, and also some explanation of Article IX, which would obviate difficulties

(¹) [Not reproduced. It instructs Sir E. Satow to point out to the Chinese Government that by asking their adhesion to the Lhasa Convention Great Britain recognized Chinese suzerainty over Thibet, and to repeat the warning, already given by Colonel Younghusband to the Amban, as to the extent of Chinese responsibility if she pressed her rights as suzerain to extremes.]

alluded to. Prince will take two or three days to consider what form this should take before telegraphing to Amban, and will at the same time communicate it to me for your Lordship's information. I explained that this course would save a week's time.

Wu wished me to offer suggestion as to its wording, but I declined on the ground that I had no instructions to give advice on such a point. It was for the Chinese Government to state their wishes.

Prince also said that they proposed to send an experienced official as speedily as possible to Thibet to place things on a proper footing, as the conduct of Dalai Lamà had created great confusion, and it was desirable also to establish commercial relations on a suitable basis. This functionary, however, would not supersede Yu-tai, in whose ability he had entire confidence. He was anxious that this action should not be misconstrued by His Majesty's Government, and therefore acquainted me with proposal in advance. I said I thought His Majesty's Government would have no objection provided that it did not cause delay in the negotiations regarding the signature of Adhesion Agreement.⁽²⁾

(Sent to India.)

⁽²⁾ [On September 29 Sir E. Satow reported that the Chinese Government admitted that their anxiety in regard to the diminution of Chinese suzerainty had been set at rest by Colonel Younghusband's declarations. All they wanted was the addition of some clause embodying these declarations, and also some explanation of Article IX which would obviate difficulties about the infringement of the most-favoured-nation rights of other Powers. In April 1905, an Adhesion Convention was drafted by the Government of India; but after wearisome negotiations lasting throughout the year the Chinese Government was informed that the British Government considered it useless to continue them. On January 20, 1906, the Chinese Government reopened the discussions by presenting a draft which formed the basis of the Convention signed on April 27, 1906.]

No. 301.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. China 1752.

(No. 344.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 27, 1904.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires called upon me today, and said that he had been instructed to speak to me upon the subject of the recently concluded Agreement between Great Britain and Tibet, the text of which had appeared in the "Times" newspaper. The Convention had created an unfavourable impression at St. Petersburg, and seemed to the Russian Government to contain provisions inconsistent with the assurances which I had given to the Russian Ambassador with regard to Tibet upon the 2nd of June.⁽¹⁾ M. Sazonow referred particularly to Article VII, under which it was stipulated that, in order to secure the punctual discharge of the obligations contracted by Tibet, British troops were to remain in occupation of the Chumbi Valley for three years at least, or possibly a longer period. As to this, M. Sazonow pointed out that I had told Count Benckendorff that Colonel Younghusband's Mission was not to be allowed to lead to the occupation of Tibet, and as Chumbi was Tibetan territory the Russian Government were at a loss to understand how we could justify the Article in question.

I told him that I adhered to everything which I had said to Count Benckendorff in the communication to which he referred, and that I believed that the recently concluded arrangement contained nothing inconsistent with it. I called his attention to the fact that my pledge as to the occupation of Tibet was qualified by words in which I had explained that our action must to some extent depend upon the conduct of the Tibetans themselves, and I said that as the Tibetans had subsequently misconducted themselves in the most serious manner—so much so that we had been compelled to advance to Lhasa itself in order to obtain reasonable

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 310, No. 293.]

terms—it would have been easy for us to claim for ourselves the right to reconsider our proposals and to modify them materially. We had however remained faithful to our original policy, and the temporary occupation of Tibetan territory which was now proposed was resorted to only for the purpose of obtaining a guarantee for that reparation which we had from the first announced our intention of obtaining. I had not yet had time to confer with the Secretary of State for India, but I understood that discussions were still proceeding as to the amount of the indemnity and the length of the period over which its payment was to be spread; M. Sazonow might however take it from me that nothing was further from our intentions than to name a sum which it would be altogether beyond the power of the Tibetans to provide, or so to arrange matters as to give ourselves a pretext for the permanent annexation of Thibetan territory.

M. Sazonow went on to say that Article IX of the "Times" version appeared to be also contrary to our pledges, because it gave us a virtual protectorate over the country and a control over its internal administration. I said that although the account given by the "Times" of the Convention was no doubt in the main correct, it was I believed, slightly misleading in one or two passages, particularly in the case of Article IX. Article IX, as I understood it, was a kind of self-denying ordinance which affected ourselves as well as other Powers. We had no desire to annex Tibetan territory or to intervene in Tibetan affairs, or to have political representatives in the country, but it must be clearly understood that other Powers were to be placed under a similar disability. I made however no secret of the fact that, owing to the geographical position of Tibet, it was absolutely necessary that Great Britain should be the tutelary Power, and should occupy as such a predominant position with regard to Tibetan affairs. M. Sazonow said that he quite understood that we should desire to exclude political representatives of other Powers, but did we also desire to exclude the commerce of those Powers? What would, *e.g.*, happen if a foreigner were to apply for a concession to make a road or to open a mine in the country? I said that if there was any question of making roads in the neighbourhood of the Indian frontier it was obvious that we could not allow the intervention of foreigners. Without having the actual words of the Convention before me, I could not say how foreign merchants would be dealt with, but we certainly could not permit the appearance of foreign representatives in the guise of commercial agents. I asked M. Sazonow whether I was to understand that Russia had any desire to establish such agencies. He said that he believed she had no intention of doing anything of the kind, but that he had been instructed to question me upon the point.

As he appeared inclined to insist that the Convention was open to criticism because it gave us a predominant position with reference to Tibet, I begged him to compare the extreme moderation of our present proposals with the arrangements which had actually been made in other parts of the Far East, *e.g.*, by Germany in regard to Shantung, by Russia in the case of Manchuria. I said that if he would be good enough to refer to the agreement finally concluded in the latter case, he would find that the terms insisted upon were of a very different character from those with which we had been content.

I ended the conversation by repeating that we had every intention of loyally carrying out the assurances which I had given on behalf of His Majesty's Government, but that those assurances must be interpreted in a reasonable manner. We should never have given them if we could have imagined that they could have been interpreted as precluding us from requiring from a barbarous adversary the very modest securities which we were taking for the fulfilment of the obligations which that adversary had assumed.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 302.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Satow.

F.O. China 1752.

Tel. (No. 142.)

Foreign Office, September 29, 1904.

D. 6 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 207 of Sep[tember] 26.

Tibetan Convention.

I think it should be possible for you to re-assure Chinese Government and to convince them that they need have no misgivings as to effects of Convention on Treaty rights of foreign Powers.

Chinese suzerainty is scrupulously respected and no appropriation of Tibetan territory is involved by temporary occupation of Chumbi Valley pending payment of indemnity which will be fixed at an extremely moderate amount and made repayable within a short term of years.

As to claims of foreign countries you can say that Convention does them no harm whatever. The new trade marts will be open to all lawful trade and the tariff dues will be the same for all imports and exports no matter of what origin.

As to Article IX British predominance is essential owing to geographical position of Tibet. In reply to objection of foreign Powers on ground that convention infringed m[ost-]f[avoured-]n[ation] t[reatment] clauses you can refer Chinese Government to instances of similar special arrangements between limitrophe countries—and Sikkim Treaty of March 7, 1890,⁽¹⁾ Article IV, and I to VI of regulations appended thereto, December 5, 1893⁽²⁾: also Burma Treaty of March 1st, 1894, Article VIII.⁽³⁾

Version of convention published in Press here is somewhat misleading as to above points.

In these circumstances you should press Chinese Government to give their early adhesion. It would be most unfortunate if despatch of Special Envoy should involve further delay.

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 82 (1889-90), pp. 9-11. The date is there given as March 17, 1890.]

⁽²⁾ [Printed in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 85 (1892-3), pp. 1235-7.]

⁽³⁾ [Printed in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 87 (1894-5), pp. 1311-9.]

No. 303.

Foreign Office to India Office.

F.O. China 1752.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 20, 1904.

I am desired by the Marquess of Lansdowne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant upon the subject of the Tibet Convention.

Lord Lansdowne has carefully considered Mr. Brodrick's observations with regard to the proposal that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] should accept a reservation to the effect that Article IX of the Convention shall not be so interpreted as to deprive other Powers of their rights under existing Treaties. This reservation was, Lord Lansdowne believes, first suggested by himself as a convenient means of disarming the opposition of the other Powers. Having regard however to the correspondence which has since taken place, His Lordship is, upon the whole, inclined to think that it might be preferable to accede to the view expressed by the Government of India in their tel[egram] of Oct[ober] 10, and to decide that no further mention of the reservation should be made to the Chinese Government until the Government of India has had a full opportunity of discussing the whole question with Colonel Younghusband, and laying before the Secretary of State their mature opinions upon the subject. Lord Lansdowne thinks it quite possible to maintain in a general way that the privileges secured to Great Britain by the Convention do not in fact involve any denial of the rights secured to other Powers by their Treaties with China. But the extent of those rights and their existence, so far as Thibet is concerned, is open to

question, and Mr. Brodrick will probably agree with His Lordship in thinking that a discussion upon the subject is to be deprecated at the present time. There is however no doubt that Germany and other Powers are entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment in China, and His Majesty's Government have repeatedly admitted that Tibet is a dependency of China. Their demand for the adhesion of the Chinese Government to the Agreement affords in itself evidence that this has been their position, and they are therefore precluded from now using any arguments founded upon a contrary hypothesis. It would, in these circumstances, probably be better to defend the Agreement on the ground that the only special privileges which it secures for Great Britain are those which she has a right to claim as the Power whose geographical position entitles her to a preponderating political influence in Tibet, and that the exercise of these privileges, as described in the Draft Convention, is not likely to have results injurious to other Powers.

In Lord Lansdowne's opinion, it would be safer to adopt this line of argument, rather than to offer the suggested reservation with regard to the Treaty rights of other Powers. The evidence available seems to show that, in point of fact, the Treaties which have hitherto been executed by China with foreign Powers have not been operative in Tibet, and it might therefore be inadvisable to admit even by implication that such Powers at this moment possess any rights in that country in virtue of their Treaties with China. Such an admission would not improbably lead, as the Government of India apprehends, to a claim on the part of the Powers to be given the right of appointing Agents in Tibet with a position corresponding to that of the British Agents who will be appointed to watch over British interests in the Tibetan marts.

With regard to the negotiations for obtaining the adhesion of China to the Agreement, Lord Lansdowne remains of opinion that these should take place at Peking, and he suggests for Mr. Brodrick's consideration that it would not be advisable to proceed with them until the terms of the Agreement between the Government of India and Tibet have been finally settled.

[I am, &c.
F. A. CAMPBELL.]

[ED. NOTE.—Further negotiations between Great Britain and Russia were interrupted by the War. During this period, attempts were made to secure the adhesion of China to the Lhasa Convention concluded with Thibet on September 7. These were not successful at the time, but were renewed at the end of 1905, and resulted, as shown below, in the conclusion of a convention on April 27, 1906, *infra*, pp. 323–5, No. 305 and *encl.*

At the beginning of 1906 Anglo-Russian conversations were resumed, as is shown in the despatch below to Mr. Spring-Rice.⁽¹⁾ The conversation recorded here followed an interview between Count Benckendorff and Sir C. Hardinge on the 2nd at which the former communicated some information which Count Lamsdorff had received from Peking with reference to the Anglo-Chinese negotiations. Sir C. Hardinge informed Count Benckendorff that the information was "purely imaginary," and the despatch to Mr. Spring-Rice of January 3, *infra*, p. 323, No. 304, shows that Sir Edward Grey confirmed this. The following paper indicates the character of these rumours:

Paper given to Sir C. Hardinge by Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 371/176.

January 2, 1906.

Principes de l'arrangement.

Ne pas apporter de modification au régime politique du Thibet. Commentaires fournis par Lord Lansdowne: tels que:

1. Thibet aux Thibetains.
2. Exclusion des "Puissances y compris l'Angleterre."

⁽¹⁾ [*cp.* also Sir C. Hardinge's despatch No. 32 to Sir E. Grey of January 6, 1906, *infra*, pp. 622–3, Appendix III.]

Renseignements de Peking.

1. Chine ne peut prendre aucune part dans l'administration du Thibet sans entente préalable avec Angleterre.

2. Privilège exclusif pour Angleterre de chem[in] de fer, exploitation minérale et entreprises de commerce.

3. Ne pas entretenir de forces armées au Thibet, une obligation pareille pour Angleterre.

4. N'admettre la participation d'aucune autre Puissance ni sujets étrangers dans les affaires du Thibet.

Mes observations.

Est une nouveauté (?) au privilège Anglais.

Constitue immixtion Anglaise et apporte modification au régime politique intérieur. Intégrité Chinoise.

De même privilège Anglais.

Modification du régime politique antérieur. Limitation d'intégrité Chinoise.

D'après le commentaire de Lord Lansdowne devrait être y compris l'Angleterre et les sujets Anglais.

Jan. 2, '06.]

No. 304.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/176.

(No. 11.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 3, 1906.

The Russian Ambassador read to me today a memorandum of what Lord Lansdowne had said to him with regard to the effect and intention of the British Treaty with Tibet. I told him that things still remained in the same position, and that the negotiations with China had related solely to China's adhesion to the Treaty with Tibet to which Lord Lansdowne had referred. We were not making new stipulations with China, but simply asking her to countersign what Tibet had agreed to, and the question had in no way changed since Lord Lansdowne spoke to Count Benckendorff.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

No. 305.

Sir E. Satow to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/177.

(No. 195.)

Sir,

Peking, D. April 28, 1906.

R. June 18, 1906.

I have the honour to forward an original of the Convention signed yesterday in English and Chinese by the Chinese Plenipotentiary Mr. Tong Shoa-yi and myself providing for the adhesion of China to the Lhasa Convention of 7th September 1904. The other original copy is retained in the archives of His Majesty's Legation. As the terms of this document have been discussed in the telegrams which have been exchanged between your Office and His Majesty's Legation it seems unnecessary to offer any explanation of the form which it has taken.

I add also a copy, and am sending to the Indian Government a copy of both the English and Chinese texts.

I enclose also copies of the exchange of Notes signed at the same time, by which the Chinese Government undertakes not to employ any foreigner in Tibet in any capacity, and of a private letter, which I gave to Mr. Tong at his request, embodying the verbal declaration I was authorized to make, that His Majesty's Government would

not offer any objection to the employment of foreigners for the next 12 months in connection with Customs organization.

I may add that after our signatures had been affixed and we had congratulated each other on the termination of a negotiation which from first to last has been conducted in a perfectly amicable manner and without any difference of opinion on matters of principle, Mr. Tong assured me that the terms of the Convention were regarded by His Majesty the Emperor as entirely satisfactory.

I have, &c.

ERNEST SATOW.

Enclosure 1 in No. 305.

Convention between Great Britain and China.⁽¹⁾

Whereas His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of China are sincerely desirous to maintain and perpetuate the relations of friendship and good understanding which now exist between their respective Empires;

And Whereas the refusal of Tibet to recognise the validity of or to carry into full effect the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of March 17th 1890 and Regulations of December 5th 1893 placed the British Government under the necessity of taking steps to secure their rights and interests under the said Convention and Regulations;

And Whereas a Convention of ten articles was signed at Lhasa on September 7th 1904 on behalf of Great Britain and Tibet, and was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India on behalf of Great Britain on November 11th, 1904, a declaration on behalf of Great Britain modifying its terms under certain conditions being appended thereto;

His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the Emperor of China have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have for this purpose named Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:—

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland:

Sir Ernest Mason Satow, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His said Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of China;

and His Majesty the Emperor of China:

His Excellency Tong Shoa-yi, His said Majesty's High Commissioner Plenipotentiary and a Vice-President of the Board of Foreign Affairs.

who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and true form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in six articles:—

ARTICLE I.

The Convention concluded on September 7th 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet, the texts of which in English and Chinese are attached to the present Convention as an annexe, is hereby confirmed, subject to the modification stated in the declaration appended thereto, and both of the High Contracting Parties engage to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified therein.

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVI, (Cd. 3088), pp. 119–122. Presented to Parliament August 1906. Ratifications were exchanged at London, July 23, 1906. The Lhasa Convention of September 7, 1904, is printed as an annex in this command paper.]

ARTICLE II.

The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet. The Government of China also undertakes not to permit any other foreign state to interfere with the territory or internal administration of Tibet.

ARTICLE III.

The concessions which are mentioned in Article 9 (*d*) of the Convention concluded on September 7th 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet are denied to any state or to the subject of any state other than China, but it has been arranged with China that at the trade marts specified in Article 2 of the aforesaid Convention Great Britain shall be entitled to lay down telegraph lines connecting with India.

ARTICLE IV.

The provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and Regulations of 1893 shall, subject to the terms of this present Convention and annexe thereto, remain in full force.

ARTICLE V.

The English and Chinese texts of the present Convention have been carefully compared and found to correspond but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

ARTICLE VI.

This Convention shall be ratified by the Sovereigns of both countries and ratifications shall be exchanged at London within three months after the date of signature by the Plenipotentiaries of both Powers.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, four copies in English and four in Chinese.

Done at Peking this twenty-seventh day of April, one thousand nine hundred and six, being the fourth day of the fourth month of the thirty-second year of the reign of Kuang-hsü.

TONG SHOA-YI.
(L.S.)

ERNEST SATOW.
(L.S.)

Enclosure 2 in No. 305.

Mr. Tong Shoa-yi to Sir E. Satow.

Your Excellency,

April 27, 1906.

With reference to the Convention relating to Tibet which was signed today by Your Excellency and myself on behalf of our respective Governments I have the honour to declare formally that the Government of China undertakes not to employ any one, not a Chinese subject and not of Chinese nationality, in any capacity whatsoever in Tibet.

I avail, &c.

TONG SHOA-YI.

Enclosure 3 in No. 305.

Sir E. Satow to Mr. Tong Shoa-yi.

Your Excellency,

Peking, April 27, 1906.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's Note of this day's date in which you declare formally, with reference to the Convention relating to Tibet which was signed to-day by Your Excellency and myself on behalf of our

respective Governments, that the Government of China undertakes not to employ any one, not a Chinese subject and not of Chinese nationality, in any capacity whatsoever in Tibet.

I avail, &c.

ERNEST SATOW.

Enclosure 4 in No. 305.

Sir E. Satow to Mr. Tong Shoa-yi.

Private.

Dear Mr. Tong,

Peking, April 27, 1906.

As regards the undertaking given by the Chinese Government in your Note of to-day not to employ any one not a Chinese subject or of Chinese nationality in any capacity in Tibet, I am authorised to state that no objection will be raised by His Majesty's Government to the employment by China of foreigners for a period of 12 months from to-day, being the date of signature of our Convention, in order to give time for the organisation of the Customs in Tibet. But after April 27th 1907 the undertaking in your Note will of course come into force and be faithfully carried out.

Yours, &c.

ERNEST SATOW.

II.—ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS, 1906-1907.

No. 306.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/176.

(No. 251.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 10, 1906.

R. April 17, 1906.

I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a telegram addressed by the Emperor to the Dalai Lama, under the title of "supreme head of the Tibetan people." I may observe that the term used may simply imply that the Lama is the spiritual head of the people as for instance the Grand Rabbi might be described as the "supreme head" of the Jewish community. But I understand from the Chinese Minister that he regards the telegram in rather a serious light and as an infringement of China's sovereignty.

I saw Count Lamsdorff yesterday and in the course of conversation I observed that although I had received no instructions to mention the subject I could not help remarking that the terms of the telegram and the fact of its having been sent and published in the "Official Messenger" might create a disagreeable impression in England. He said at once that he was glad to have an opportunity of talking to me on the subject. When the Emperor had received the Dorjiev mission he had taken care that you should be at once informed as he was afraid that it might be misinterpreted. As I was aware, his object was to pursue a policy of perfect frankness, which, in his judgment, was the best way of avoiding complications. He could assure me that the policy of Russia towards Thibet was one of absolute non-intervention. The Russian Government desired that neither Russia nor England, nor any other Power should interfere in Thibetan affairs, and that Thibet should be tranquil both externally and internally. He understood that this was also the policy of His Majesty's Government. But the Emperor could not be indifferent to the sentiment of the large Buddhist population of the Russian Empire. They looked to the Dalai Lama as their spiritual head and his fate could not be a matter of indifference to them. At the present moment

the Dalai Lama was in Mongolia as a guest of one of the Mongol Princes. He desired to return to Lhasa but he was afraid that if he did so his life would be in danger. He had pressed for a safe conduct which of course it was impossible to give. But in order to encourage him to return it had been thought advisable to send a telegram of a cordial nature which could reassure him and the Buddhist population. The Russian Government desired most sincerely that he should remain quiet when he returned and that he should do nothing to give reasonable cause for anxiety. He begged me to give you this message which I promised to do.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Enclosure in No. 306.

August Telegram from The Emperor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Supreme Head of the Thibetan People.

My numerous subjects, professing the Buddhist faith, won the happiness of saluting their spiritual Chief during his sojourn in the north of Mongolia contiguous to the Russian Empire. Rejoicing that my subjects were able to receive a beneficent, spiritual influence from Your Holiness, I beg you to believe my feeling of sincere gratitude and esteem towards you.

NICHOLAS.

March 23 (5 April), 1906.

No. 307.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/176.

(No. 252.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 10, 1906.

R. April 17, 1906.

With reference to my immediately preceding despatch on the subject of the telegram sent by the Emperor to the Dalai Lama,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to state that Count Witte sent a message to me to the effect that the telegram had no political character and was designed mainly for internal consumption, with special regard to the sentiments of the Buddhist communities in Russia.

In my conversation with Count Lamsdorff I confined myself to observations of a very general character on the subject of the desirability of pursuing a policy of perfect frankness in regard to Thibet as to all the subjects which interested the two Governments.

I venture however to remark that the Russian Government must be aware of our objections to the return of the Grand Lama to Lhasa as also of the reception accorded to the Tashi Lama in India. There are therefore symptoms of a possible conflict arising out of the antagonism between the two spiritual potentates one of whom will support Russian and the other British interests. As you are aware, Russian policy has long aimed at consolidating Russian influence in Mongolia and for this purpose an agent in the person of the revered head of the Buddhist communities would be of paramount importance. The Grand Lama appears to be not unwilling to play this rôle. But until he returns to Lhasa he is a living example of Russian helplessness. He appears to have sent word to the Emperor that he is afraid for his life. It is therefore highly desirable from the Russian point of view that these fears should be dispelled and it is no doubt thought that the public recognition of his holy character and of the Emperor's regard, will serve as a species of safe conduct and may induce him to hasten his departure.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

If he returns to Lhasa there can be little doubt that he will do all in his power to make himself useful to the Russians. On the other hand it is to be presumed that the Tashi Lama will play a somewhat similar part as regards England.

The policy of the Russian Minister in Peking will no doubt be aimed at preventing the Chinese Government from doing, what I am assured by the Chinese Minister here they desire to do;—that is, in case the Lama attempts to play a political part, to depose him. Such a step would be regarded as a great blow to Russian prestige and would be violently opposed by the Russian Government.

There appear therefore to be grounds for the fear that complications may arise in the near future and as Count Lamsdorff has expressed his desire that a policy of perfect frankness should be pursued by the two Governments, it might perhaps be advisable, that some more definite understanding should be arrived at, which could preclude the possibility of a serious conflict of interests.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

MINUTES.

I rather doubt the advisability of attempting to come to any more detailed arrangement with Russia in regard to Tibet. It is evident from what C[oun]t Lamsdorff said (see desp[atch] No. 251) that what the Russians w[oul]d aim at is that we should be equally debarred with them from all interference in Tibetan affairs. I don't think the Gov[ernment] of India w[oul]d wish to tie their hands for all time by any such declaration; and it w[oul]d be going further than anything we have said so far. Lord Lansdowne for instance told the Russian Amb[assado]r (Oct. 5, '04) that if any Power was to have a voice in the external affairs of Tibet, that Power must be G[rea]t Britain. It therefore seems undesirable that we should place ourselves in a position of absolute equality with Russia, and yet it is obvious that if any sort of negotiation is started, the Russians will lead off from this standpoint.

F. A. C.

Apl. 18, '06.

This is a real difficulty in proposing to Russia a separate agreement about Tibet, but if China adheres I can make another statement to Count Benckendorff and tell him what has been done and what the position is.

E. G.

No. 308.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/176.

Tel. (No. 80.)

Foreign Office, May 1, 1906, 3.15 P.M.

Your telegrams Nos. 74⁽¹⁾ and 75⁽²⁾ of April 29 and my telegram No. 79⁽³⁾ of April 30. Return of Dalai Lama to Tibet.

You should speak to Count Lamsdorff in the sense of my communication to the Russian Ambassador. You should at the same time inform him that in the opinion of H[is] M[ajesty's] Government the presence of a Russian escort beyond the frontier of Tibet would be objectionable as constituting an interference by Russia in the internal affairs of that country and express the hope that immediate orders may be sent to ensure that the Buriat escort shall not proceed beyond the frontier of Mongolia.

(1) [Tel. No. 74 from Mr. Spring-Rice of April 29, 1906, quotes a communication from Count Lamsdorff which states that some Buriats have formed an escort to conduct the Dalai Lama on his return to Lhasa, and provided themselves with arms. The escort was approved by the Russian Government.]

(2) [In Tel. No. 75, of April 29, 1906, Mr. Spring-Rice suggests referring Count Lamsdorff to the conditions of Lord Lansdowne's assurance of June 2, 1904 (*v. supra*, p. 310, No. 293). The Buriat escort was probably armed by Russia and consisted of Russian soldiers.]

(3) [Tel. No. 79 to Mr. Spring-Rice, of April 30, 1906, describes a conversation with Count Benckendorff in which he was told that an armed escort for the Dalai Lama would give rise to trouble. The terms of the Adhesion Agreement were also explained.]

No. 309.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/176.

(No. 292.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. May 2, 1906.**R. May 7, 1906.*

I called on Count Lamsdorff to-day, at his official reception, and handed to him a memorandum, copy of which I have the honour to enclose, embodying your telegraphic communications of the last two days on the subject of Thibet.

Count Lamsdorff read the memorandum attentively and then informed me that you were perfectly right in assuming that the principle by which the Russian policy was guided in all questions affecting Thibet was the principle of absolute non-intervention. With regard to the recent incident of the Buriat Guard he said the circumstances were as follow;—A number of the Emperor's subjects looked on the Dalai Lama as their High Priest, and quasi-divinity. The Dalai Lama himself, and his disciples on his behalf, were convinced that his life was threatened in case of his return to Lhassa. It was highly undesirable that he should continue his wanderings in the neighbourhood of Urga and among the Princes of Mongolia. His return to his capital city was to be wished for in the interests of the Buddhist communities of Northern Asia. But he had, as it appeared, refused to return unless he received some solid guarantees that his life would not be in peril. These guarantees the Russian Government had been unable to give him. But it was difficult for them to refuse a request proffered by the Russian Buddhists that some of their number might accompany their master to his home in order to defend him from possible attacks on his sacred person.

The Russian Government, acting on the advice of the officials who had special knowledge of the temper of the Siberian Buriats, had agreed to this request, but nothing was further from their thoughts than a desire to intervene thereby in the internal affairs of Thibet.

With regard to your request that orders should be issued to prevent the Russian subjects from entering Thibetan territory, His Excellence [*sic*] said that his personal impression was that their intention had been to return to their homes as soon as the frontier had been reached. He could not however assure me positively that a definite arrangement to this effect had been arrived at. He thought (speaking for himself) that the idea was a good one: their responsibility should cease as soon as the sacred frontier had been reached and as soon as they had been able to hand over their charge to their fellow disciples in Thibet itself. He would telegraph at once to the Russian Consul at Urga and to the Russian Minister at Peking with a view to ascertaining the facts of the case and, if possible, arranging that the Buriats should return with the utmost despatch.

I pointed out that the antecedents of the Dalai Lama were well known: that if he returned to Lhassa it was quite possible that he would take an active part in politics and would initiate or carry out a policy directed against British interests, as had previously been the case, and that if this were his policy, and if he were known to be surrounded by an armed guard of Russian subjects who had accompanied him on his return, it would be quite impossible for His Majesty's Government to remain indifferent to such a situation and that the results would be unfortunate for those good relations which we had so much at heart, and would be quite inconsistent with those assurances which had already passed between the two Governments.

Count Lamsdorff informed me in reply that there never had been any question of the Buriats remaining at Lhassa. All that the Russian Government desired was that the Lama should arrive safe at his capital and that nothing should befall him *en route*, and that they themselves should be in a position to assure the Emperor's Buddhist subjects that everything had been done, which could properly be done, in order to insure his safety. Every effort had been taken to impress upon his

mind that he must not disturb the tranquillity of Thibet, that he must not assume a provocatory attitude, and that he could count on neither support nor assistance from Russia.

His Excellency assured me that he would spare no effort in order to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of the question and begged me to express to you his thanks for your frankness and his hopes that the same policy of perfect frankness would be pursued in the future.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Enclosure in No. 309.

Communication handed to Count Lamsdorff by Mr. Spring-Rice on May 2, 1906.

J'ai dit au Comte Benckendorff que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique tout en appréciant l'esprit amical dont le Gouvernement Russe a fait preuve en communiquant l'information au sujet du Dalai-Lama craint que son retour à Lhassa ne donne lieu à des troubles au Tibet, et est d'avis que dans le cas où le Lama sera accompagné dans son voyage par une escorte armée de sujets russes, il adoptera selon toute probabilité, une attitude provocante et créera des désordres, ce qui pourrait mettre le Gouvernement Britannique dans la nécessité d'avoir recours à une nouvelle intervention; éventualité d'autant plus regrettable que le Tibet jouit actuellement d'une tranquillité parfaite et que le Gouvernement Britannique est aussi loin que possible du désir d'intervenir dans ce pays. Une convention vient d'être signée avec la Chine au sujet du Tibet, dont le Gouvernement anglais n'a pas encore reçu le texte définitif. Le but de cette convention est l'adhésion de la Chine à la convention entre l'Angleterre et le Tibet.

L'Angleterre s'engage à ne pas empiéter sur le territoire tibétain et de ne pas s'ingérer dans le Gouvernement du Tibet: la Chine de sa part s'engage de ne pas permettre d'intervention étrangère dans les affaires du Tibet, extérieures ou intérieures. La convention contient en outre une clause portant que l'Angleterre ne réclame pour elle-même aucune concession qui selon la Convention avec le Tibet est défendue à une autre Puissance ou à ses sujets.

Vous porterez ce qui précède à la connaissance du Comte Lamsdorff qui, j'en suis sûr, verra dans cette convention une nouvelle preuve du désir du Gouvernement Britannique de s'abstenir de toute intervention dans les affaires tibétaines: et vous ajouterez que dans l'opinion du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique la présence au delà de la frontière Tibétaine d'une escorte armée de sujets Russes est de nature à soulever des objections sérieuses comme étant en effet un acte d'intervention de la part de la Russie dans les affaires intérieures de ce pays.

Je suis convaincu que le Gouvernement Russe, en conformité avec des déclarations déjà faites par le Comte Lamsdorff partage notre point de vue que toute intervention étrangère dans les affaires du Tibet est contraire aux intérêts tant Russes qu'Anglais: et dans cet ordre d'idées je vous prie d'exprimer notre espoir que le Gouvernement Russe ne refusera pas d'envoyer des ordres aussitôt que possible dans le but d'empêcher l'escorte de Bouriates de procéder au delà de la frontière de la Mongolie.

Draft Instructions to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/177.

Foreign Office, May 23, 1906.

In discussing the Thibetan question, Sir A. Nicolson should point out to the Russian Government that His Majesty's Government have sought no new advantages for themselves in their negotiations with the Governments of Thibet and China, except such as are necessary to secure the full enjoyment of the rights acquired under the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and the Regulations of 1893.⁽²⁾ They have agreed to the indemnity of a reduced amount being paid from funds provided by the Chinese Government in three annual instalments instead of being spread out over a much longer term of years, and on the completion of these three payments the occupation of the Chumbi Valley will cease, provided, however, that the trade-marts referred to in Article II of the Convention of the 7th September, 1904,⁽³⁾ shall have been effectively opened for three years, and that, in the meantime, the Thibetans shall have faithfully complied with the terms of that Convention in all other respects.

The British Government are most anxious to complete the evacuation of Thibet, and merely claim the observance of the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and the Regulations of 1893, as well as of the Anglo-Thibetan Convention of the 7th September, 1904, and of the Anglo-Chinese Convention concluded on the 27th April.⁽⁴⁾ Sir A. Nicolson will communicate to the Russian Government a copy of the Adhesion Agreement, such as it is believed to be, and an exact copy as soon as the original has been received from Peking.

It should be borne in mind that we have in the Adhesion Convention obtained the consent of the Chinese Government to establish telegraphic communication between the trade-marts and India. This is, however, necessary for the safety of the Agents we are entitled, under the Convention of the 7th September, 1904, to maintain at those trade-marts, and can hardly be regarded as conferring on us any special advantage.

It must be equally recognised that His Majesty's Government could not admit the presence in Thibet of Russian officials in any capacity whatever.

The following points may be regarded as the bases of the British demands:—

1. Russia to recognize (as Great Britain has done) the suzerainty of China over Thibet, and to engage to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet, and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration.
2. Subject to the above stipulation, Russia to recognize that, by reason of its geographical position, Great Britain has a special interest in seeing that the external relations of Thibet are not disturbed by any other Power.
3. The British and Russian Governments to severally engage not to send a representative to Lhasa.
4. The British and Russian Governments agree not to seek or obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining, or other rights in Thibet.
5. The British and Russian Governments agree that no Thibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to them, or to any of their subjects.

(1) [The text given here has been checked by a printed copy of May 23, in the Embassy Archives, Russia F.O. 181/860, which is endorsed "amended copy." The original draft was submitted to the Political Committee of the Council of India on May 21, and certain alterations suggested by them were embodied in the amended copy.]

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 305, *Ed. note*.]

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 314-5, No. 298.]

(4) [*v. supra*, pp. 324-5, No. 305, *encl.*]

No. 311.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/177.

(No. 352.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. June 8, 1906.

Sir,

R. June 18, 1906.

I called yesterday afternoon by appointment on Monsieur Isvolsky, and we commenced our conversations in regard to Thibet. His Excellency said that he had waited on the Emperor on the previous day, and that His Majesty had mentioned to him what had passed at my audience in regard to an understanding between Great Britain and Russia on several questions of interest to both countries; and His Excellency added that the Emperor was desirous that an agreement should if possible be reached. Monsieur Isvolsky said that I could rely upon his using his best endeavours towards attaining that object, but as he was not very well versed in the questions with which we should have to deal he must crave my indulgence if he took some little time in studying the past records.

I assured His Excellency that I desired in no way to hasten matters, and that in fact it was desirable that the questions should be examined with care.

Monsieur Isvolsky then enquired of me what was the procedure which I proposed to follow.

I said that there were three principal questions which we might discuss, namely, Thibet, Afghanistan and Persia: and that it seemed to me that the best course to pursue would be to examine each question *seriatim*, and that when we had practically come to an understanding on one question we should proceed to the next, and that when we had concluded our discussions we could draw up a convention embracing all the conclusions at which we had arrived.

Monsieur Isvolsky said that he understood that I did not desire to have three separate agreements, but only one: and that I considered that the settlement of each question should depend finally on an agreement on all of them. I said that was precisely my view, and that we should be following the course that had been adopted during the negotiations of the Anglo-French agreement. Monsieur Isvolsky expressed his concurrence with the method which I had proposed.

I thereupon gave verbally to Monsieur Isvolsky a rapid sketch of the Convention with China of 1890 and of the Regulations of 1893, as well as of the Convention with Thibet of 1904, accompanying my statement with some necessary explanatory remarks. I then handed to him a copy of the Convention of April 27, 1906, as we believed it to be, and informed him that I would give him an exact copy as soon as the original had been received from Peking.

I also read to Monsieur Isvolsky certain notes which I had made for my own guidance, taken from the instructions which you had been good enough to furnish me, and I stated that I should be prepared to discuss with him on the basis of the points to which I had referred.*

His Excellency asked if he might be supplied with some statement in writing, as it would be difficult for him to remember exactly the points which I had mentioned.

It seemed to me desirable that there should be no possibility of misunderstanding, and I, therefore expressed my readiness to supply, in an informal and private manner, the information which he solicited. I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a private communication⁽¹⁾ with its enclosure, which I made to Monsieur Isvolsky this morning.

I should mention that during our conversation Monsieur Isvolsky spoke with some anxiety as to the future of the Dalai Lama: and enquired of me whether I had any information as to his whereabouts or movements. I said that beyond what the Russian Ambassador in London had communicated to you I had personally no information. Monsieur Isvolsky said that he hoped that it would be clearly understood

(1) [Enclosure 1, the covering letter, is purely formal and is therefore not reproduced.]

in London that the Russian Government had no desire to intervene in the movements of that personage, and that strict orders had been sent to endeavour if possible to prevent the Buriat escort from traversing the frontier of Thibet. He enquired whether my Government were opposed to the re-entry of the Dalai Lama into Lhassa. I said that I could not say that I had any precise instructions on that point, but that I had gathered, when in London, that the return of this personage would not be favourably viewed, as his reappearance might very probably occasion intrigues and troubles. I would, however, telegraph and enquire of you what views His Majesty's Government held on the subject.

Monsieur Isvolsky then remarked that he had learnt that the Dalai Lama had been much pleased with the Convention signed at Peking at the end of last April. I observed that the Dalai Lama must possess facilities for very rapid communication to have been so speedily in possession of the terms of the Convention; but Monsieur Isvolsky added that it was merely a report which had reached him.

Monsieur Isvolsky then enlarged on the great importance which the Russian Government attached to the future of this personage, as he was spiritual chief of a large section of Russian subjects, whose religious susceptibilities it would be most unwise to offend: and that it was desirable that a Dalai Lama should be established at Lhassa. Were my Government opposed to the installation and presence of any Dalai Lama or only to this particular one? I replied that I was really not in a position to give him a reply, as I had not consulted with you on this particular point.

On leaving Monsieur Isvolsky, he said that he thought it would perhaps be better if I did not telegraph what he has said about the Dalai Lama, as he would like to study the question a little more thoroughly. I replied that I would ascertain your views on the subject for my own guidance and information.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 2 in No. 311.

*Bases of Prospective Conversations between Sir A. Nicolson and M. Isvolski
respecting Thibet.*

June 8, 1906.

(I.) The Russian Government will doubtless recognize as His Majesty's Government have done, the suzerainty of China over Thibet, engaging at the same time to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet and to abstain from all interference with its internal administration.

(II.) It is clear that by reason of its geographical position Great Britain has a special interest in seeing that the external relations of Thibet are not disturbed by any other Power, and I have no doubt that the Russian Government will recognize that fact.

(III.) The British and Russian Governments to severally engage not to send a Representative to Lhassa.

(IV.) The British and Russian Governments to agree not to seek or obtain, whether for themselves or for their subjects any concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining, or other rights in Thibet.

(V.) The British and Russian Governments agree that no Thibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to them or to any of their subjects.

It is doubtless unnecessary to add that no Russian Officials should be present in Thibet in any capacity whatsoever.

No. 312.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 358.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 11, 1906.

R. June 18, 1906.

I informed the French Ambassador yesterday, in confidence, that I had opened conversations with Monsieur Isvolsky on the subject of an arrangement in regard to Thibet, but that I had not done more than explain to His Excellency the outline of the Conventions which had been concluded with that country and China, and that I had communicated to him privately certain points which might form the basis of future discussions. I told Monsieur Bompard privately that Monsieur Isvolsky appeared chiefly anxious on two questions: the future position of the Dalai Lama, and the intention of China to assert and consolidate her position in Mongolia. Monsieur Isvolsky, I said, had spoken to me at some length on both these questions, but that when my interview was concluded he had begged me not to telegraph to my Government any of the views which he had expressed, as on further study and reflection he might feel disposed to alter them. This method of procedure might, I feared, be a little irksome if continually repeated.

Monsieur Bompard told me that he himself had observed that Monsieur Isvolsky, though ready to converse freely, was nervous lest his statements should be taken as a positive declaration of his views, and was always careful to explain that what he had said should not be interpreted as the opinions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He was, Monsieur Bompard remarked, "très fuyant," and he had himself had an instance of this in a conversation which he had held on the subject of Russian co-operation in the Bagdad Railway. Monsieur Isvolsky had on that occasion expressed his entire concurrence with the proposal, but had at the close of the interview receded from the views which he had enunciated. I think that this hesitation will very possibly disappear when Monsieur Isvolsky has been a little longer in office, and has rendered himself more fully acquainted with the multifarious questions with which he has to deal.

As regards the Bagdad Railway, Monsieur Bompard said, as Mr. Spring-Rice has already reported, that the chief of the Staff had no objections to Russian co-operation, but that Monsieur Isvolsky had intimated that the Minister of Finance was opposed to Russian participation, fearing lest heavy responsibilities and charges should be thrown upon the Russian Treasury. Monsieur Bompard intended to take an opportunity of explaining to the Minister of Finance that the Russian Government would not be required to contribute capital, as this was a matter for banks and financial houses to undertake. His fears as to the responsibility of the Russian Treasury were, therefore, needless.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

The Russian banks would have no difficulty in finding money in France for the Bagdad Railway.

C. H.

No. 313.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 13, 1906.

F.O. 371/177.

Tel. (No. 114.)

D. 8.35 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Thibet.

At weekly reception to-day Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that he had submitted our bases of discussion to the Emperor. His Majesty and he fully recognised

the liberal nature of our demands, and he had been instructed to negotiate on these bases.

He considered that there would be no difficulty in coming to an agreement on points 1, 3, 4 and 5 (see my draft instructions),⁽¹⁾ but he did not quite grasp bearing on point 2, or what was intended by external relations not being "disturbed" by any other Power.

I will explain in a despatch his observations and my reply on this point.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is desirous that the question of relations with Russian Buddhist subjects and Dalai Lama should be clearly settled. He laid great stress on necessity for some relations being maintained, and stated that it would not be possible to cut off all communications between Russian Buddhists and their spiritual chief. He also wished to know if we desired to veto any scientific geographical missions into Thibet, maintaining that, in the interests of (group omitted), this would be undesirable. I said I would refer these questions to you, and I will write fully on them. I should prefer not to compress his remarks into a telegram, especially as there is no immediate urgency.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said he wished to be perfectly frank in regard to all the doubts of the Russian Government, so as to preclude possibility of any future misunderstanding. I told him I intended to be equally frank with him, as our agreement, if one should be happily reached, must be open to no possible misinterpretation hereafter.

He added that I had also mentioned that no Russian officials in any capacity whatever should be present in Thibet, and he remarked that we had secured the privilege of sending an official to Lhasa from our trade marts. I answered him that he was in error, and that an agreement of that (group omitted) had been disallowed by His Majesty's late Government (see Blue Book No. 3, p. 86).

I think I had better rectify, in writing, his misapprehension, and propose to address to him a private note on this point.⁽²⁾

MINUTES.

There should be no difficulty in allaying any Russian suspicions with regard to point 2, but we must clearly await the despatch explaining the Russian objections.

F. A. C.
14.6.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 331, No. 310.]

⁽²⁾ [The text of this note and that of M. Isvolski's reply was given by Sir A. Nicolson in despatch No. 362 of June 13, which expands the above telegram. The two notes were as follows:

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

F.O. 371/177.

Mon cher Ministre,

Le 14 Juin, 1906.

Vous avez bien voulu exprimer hier l'opinion que nous nous sommes réservé dans la Convention de 1904 le droit d'envoyer en cas de besoin, un agent à Lhasa pour régler les différends commerciaux qui n'ont pas pu être arrangés sur place. Sans doute V[otre] E[xcellence] avait dans l'esprit l'engagement signé à Lhasa par le Col[onel] Younghusband et les autorités Thibétaines le même jour que la signature de la Convention a eu lieu. Cet engagement se trouve à page 266 du Blue Book sur East India (Thibet) No. 3.⁽³⁾

L'engagement susmentionné a été cependant désavoué par le Gouvernement Britannique comme il est dit en par[agraphe] 5 d'une dépêche au Viceroy des Indes et qui se trouve à pp. 84-6 du même Blue Book.⁽⁴⁾

La Convention de 1904 ne fait pas mention d'un pareil engagement. Je voudrais rectifier un petit malentendu, et je vous prie, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Le 2/15 Juin, 1906.

Je m'empresse de Vous remercier de votre aimable billet. C'est avec le plus vif plaisir que je prends note de la rectification qu'il contient, et je profite, &c.

ISWOLSKY.]

⁽³⁾ [*A. & P.* (1905), LVIII, (*Cd.* 2370), p. 724.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*ib.*, pp. 542-4.]

This telegram does not appear to me quite satisfactory as it looks as though the Russians will try to maintain some sort of relations with the Dalai Lama if he ever succeeds in getting back to Lhasa. We must wait for his desp[atch] before dealing with this matter. Fortunately there is no hurry and it is better to move slowly with these negotiations in view of the internal situation in Russia.

C. H.

I think Mr. Morley has lately prevented some expeditions of geographical explorers and mining prospectors from going into Tibet on our side; the I[ndia] O[ffice] might be asked to tell us whether this is so. If it is the case it will strengthen Sir A. Nicolson's position in these negotiations.

E. G.

It is so: and we might add to draft to I[ndia] O[ffice] that we propose to point this out to Sir A. Nicolson for use in his negotiations.

F. A. C.
15/6.

No. 314.

Memorandum on the Correspondence relating to the proposed Agreement between Great Britain and Russia on the subject of Thibet.

(8926)

Foreign Office, April 18, 1907.⁽¹⁾

With a view to some agreement being arrived at between Great Britain and Russia in regard to Thibet, Sir A. Nicolson was, previous to his departure for St. Petersburg in May 1906, furnished with certain draft instructions which had been drawn up after semi-official consultation with the India Office. Sir A. Nicolson was authorized to discuss the question of an Agreement in regard to Thibet with the Russian Government on the lines of these instructions.

In these instructions Sir A. Nicolson was given, for use in his discussions with the Russian Government, a résumé of the principles which have guided the policy of His Majesty's Government in their negotiations with the Chinese and Thibetan Governments respectively, and a short summary of the conditions existing at the present time as a result of the Anglo-Thibetan Convention of the 7th September, 1904, and the Anglo-Chinese Convention concluded on the 27th April, 1906.⁽²⁾ It was explained that His Majesty's Government could not admit the presence in Thibet of Russian officials in any capacity whatsoever, and the following five points were laid down as the bases of the British demands:—

1. Russia to recognize (as Great Britain has done) the suzerainty of China over Thibet, and to engage to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet, and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration.
2. Subject to the above stipulation, Russia to recognize that, by reason of its geographical position, Great Britain has a special interest in seeing that the external relations of Thibet are not disturbed by any other Power.
3. The British and Russian Governments to severally engage not to send a Representative to Lhasa.
4. The British and Russian Governments agree not to seek or obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining, or other rights in Thibet.
5. The British and Russian Governments agree that no Thibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to them, or to any of their subjects.

⁽¹⁾ [The memorandum here reproduced is mainly a reprint of one of the same title dated January 26, 1907. It contains however new material on pp. 348-9, continuing the history of the treaty negotiations from January to April.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 314-7, No. 298, and pp. 324-5, No. 305, *encl.*]

On the 7th June Sir A. Nicolson reported that he had commenced conversations with M. Isvolsky, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The course of procedure proposed by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolsky in regard to their discussions was as follows:—

Each question, those of Thibet, Afghanistan, and Persia, to be examined *seriatim*, and when views had been exchanged and an agreement had practically been come to on one question, to pass to the next, and, when the examination of subjects for discussion had been terminated, to draw up and sign a Convention comprising all the questions.

To this course M. Isvolsky agreed. Sir A. Nicolson further explained to him that he did not desire an incomplete Agreement, but that a settlement of each question must depend on a general understanding being arrived at.

The question of Thibet was then gone into, and M. Isvolsky requested to be furnished with a copy in writing of the five points of the British demands. Sir A. Nicolson promised he would send him one.

At the interview, M. Isvolsky spoke with some anxiety as to the future of the Dalai Lama, and inquired of Sir A. Nicolson whether he had any information as to his whereabouts or movements. He said that he hoped that it would be clearly understood in London that the Russian Government had no desire to intervene in the movements of that personage, and that strict orders had been sent to endeavour, if possible, to prevent the Buriat escort from traversing the frontier of Thibet. He inquired whether His Majesty's Government were opposed to the re-entry of the Dalai Lama into Lhassa. M. Isvolsky then enlarged on the great importance which the Russian Government attached to the future of this personage, as he was spiritual Chief of a large section of Russian subjects whose religious susceptibilities it would be most unwise to offend, and that it was desirable that a Dalai Lama should be established at Lhassa. He inquired whether His Majesty's Government were opposed to the installation and presence of any Dalai Lama, or only to this particular one. M. Isvolsky did not wish the matter mentioned to His Majesty's Government at present.

On the 13th June M. Isvolsky informed Sir A. Nicolson that he had communicated to the Emperor the bases on which it was proposed the negotiations in regard to Thibet were to proceed. He stated that both the Emperor and himself were highly satisfied with the liberal character of the demands of His Majesty's Government, and that he had received instructions to use his best efforts to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement.

M. Isvolsky stated that he had examined the five points of the British demands, and was of opinion that there would be no difficulty in coming to an agreement on points 1, 3, 4, and 5. He was, however, not clear as to the meaning and scope of point 2, which mentioned that Russia should recognize that Great Britain, by reason of her geographical position, had a special interest in seeing that the external relations of Thibet were not disturbed by any other Power.

The word "disturbed" somewhat puzzled him, and he would like some explanation as to what would be considered a "disturbance." He was of opinion that the various engagements laid down in points 1, 3, 4, and 5, and which the Russian Government would probably accept, covered any possibility of intervention of any nature. At the same time if Russia recognized the special interests of Great Britain by reason of the geographic position of the latter, he thought that His Majesty's Government should be willing to acknowledge what he termed the "spiritual" interest of Russia in Thibet.

As he had pointed out before, the Buddhist subjects of Russia, who were an important section, in view of their habitat and of their military aptitude, looked to the

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 111,
Telegraphic,
June 7, 1906.
Sir A. Nicolson,
Despatch
No. 352,
June 8, 1906.⁽³⁾

Dalai Lama.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 362,
June 13, 1906.⁽⁴⁾
Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 114,
Telegraphic,
June 13, 1906.⁽⁴⁾

Point 2 of the
British
demands.

Spiritual
relations with
Lhassa.

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 332-3, No. 311.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 334-5, No. 313, and note ⁽²⁾.]

Dalai Lama as their spiritual Chief. As Russia, out of regard to her Catholic subjects, had found it necessary to have relations with the spiritual Chief of the Roman Catholic religion, so would she find it desirable to have relations with the spiritual Chief of her Buddhist subjects. He did not see how it would be possible for Russia to engage to abstain from all intercourse with the Dalai Lama without offending, and possibly estranging, her Buddhist subjects. He had no desire to insist on maintaining relations with this or that individual Dalai Lama, but he considered it necessary that some arrangement should be arrived at which would enable Russia to hold communication with whatever Dalai Lama was in authority on matters strictly and solely pertaining to religious questions. He expressed the hope that His Majesty's Government would take the matter into their serious consideration.

M. Isvolsky explained that what he desired was that the relations with the Dalai Lama, in so far as an occasional Mission to St. Petersburg and intercourse between the Buriats and that personage were concerned, should be admitted by His Majesty's Government so far as they were restricted to strictly religious questions.

*Scientific
Missions.*

With regard to the exclusion of all Russian officials, in whatever capacity, from Thibet, M. Isvolsky said that of late years the Russian Geographical Society had sent a Mission into Thibet which had rendered great services to geographical science. It was surely not desired by His Majesty's Government that Thibet should be secluded absolutely and entirely from the rest of the world, and that no Mission should be permitted to enter it, even when prosecuting a perfectly non-political and solely scientific object. Every one of any note was an official of some sort in Russia, and if the word "official" were interpreted strictly and literally, this would be an effectual bar to any man of science interesting himself directly in Thibetan geography and other matters of interest to science.

Moreover, while His Majesty's Government wished to rigorously exclude all Russians from Thibet, we had provided by Convention for the occasional visit to Lhasa itself of one of our officials.

Sir A. Nicolson was, however, able to dispose of the last assertion, and promised to obtain the views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the points raised. He was of opinion that M. Isvolsky would endeavour to secure the maintenance of relations in some form with the Dalai Lama which, it appeared to Sir Arthur, he regarded as a set-off to the facilities His Majesty's Government had obtained for commercial intercourse. He proposed to obtain from M. Isvolsky more precise information as to what relations have existed between the Buriats and the Dalai Lama. The question of Geographical Missions would not, Sir A. Nicolson thought, be seriously pressed. He suggested that, while not absolutely and finally excluding such Missions from Thibet, His Majesty's Government might instruct him to intimate to the Russian Government that this question might be left open on condition that no such Mission should be dispatched for a specified term of years, and until the situation in Thibet was more settled and satisfactory.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 384,
June 20, 1906.
*Sense in which
the term
"Thibet"
should be
interpreted*

At a subsequent interview on the 20th June M. Isvolsky mentioned one further point, and that was in speaking of "Thibet" with special reference to no Russian officials being admitted therein. Did His Majesty's Government mean "Thibet" as a geographical expression, that is, as defined by geographical limits, or as an administrative unit? He explained that he made this inquiry, as there were certain districts in the northern and western parts of Thibet which lay within the boundaries of Thibet but were not under Thibetan administration.

He added that he had previously spoken of the Dalai Lama alone as spiritual head of the country. He had since ascertained that there was also the Tashi Lama, who had almost equal prerogatives, and, as he understood, a separate administrative district. It was possible that, in certain cases, the Russian Buddhists might find it necessary to be in relations with the latter also.

Sir A. Nicolson promised to refer all the points raised by M. Isvolsky to His Majesty's Government.

Course of the Negotiations in regard to (1) Dalai Lama.

Sir A. Nicolson was informed that His Majesty's Minister at Peking was not disposed to press for the permanent exclusion of the Dalai Lama from Thibet, in view of the fact that there would be great difficulty in finding a suitable place of abode if the Lama, who is little over forty years of age, were permanently excluded. Should, however, the Russian Government question him on the subject, he was authorized to state that it was because His Majesty's Government had no desire to interfere with the internal administration of Thibet that they considered the return of the Dalai Lama to Lhasa to be at the present time inexpedient. His action had been so hostile as to provoke the interference of His Majesty's Government on a previous occasion, and might necessitate it again.

To Sir A. Nicolson, No. 101, Telegraphic, June 12, 1906.

If, in the course of the discussions, the Russian Government should request that, if the present Dalai Lama be prevented from returning to Lhasa, some other should be installed in his place, he was instructed to point out to the Russian Government that, as His Majesty's Government had abstained from intervening in the internal affairs of Thibet, neither Government could or should take any steps in that direction.

Sir A. Nicolson No. 113, Telegraphic, June 8, 1906.

To Sir A. Nicolson, No. 104, Telegraphic, June 16, 1906.

Sir C. Hardinge subsequently informed M. Poklevsky that, while His Majesty's Government had no objection in principle to the return of the Dalai Lama, they were afraid that if he returned to Lhasa he would create disturbance and unrest, and that, after his action in provoking a war with this country, it was impossible to have any confidence in him and to feel sure that he would not provoke another conflict. For these reasons His Majesty's Government did not at all desire his return, and hoped that it would not take place.

On the 13th July M. Isvolsky informed Sir A. Nicolson that he had been studying the position and personality of the Dalai Lama, and that he had come to the conclusion that it would be undesirable, in the interest of both Great Britain and Russia, that that personage should return to Thibet, and suggested that some understanding might be come to as to his future. He understood that the Chinese Government were desirous that that personage should return to Thibet, and he thought that this should be counteracted, and would be ready to join in any step which might be useful to that end.

Sir A. Nicolson, No. 151, Telegraphic, July 13, 1906.

Sir A. Nicolson, No. 442, July 13, 1906.

On the 18th July M. Isvolsky said that he was anxious, in order to remove all doubts as to the attitude of the Russian Government in respect of the Dalai Lama, that the two Governments should mutually agree not to take steps for facilitating his return to Thibet, leaving China to do what she wished.

Sir A. Nicolson, No. 157, Telegraphic, July 18, 1905.

On the 19th July Sir A. Nicolson was informed that a mutual agreement not to facilitate the return of the Dalai Lama would be quite acceptable to His Majesty's Government, and communicated the information to the Russian Government on the 20th July. It was, however, pointed out to him that the action of China was outside the control of both Governments, and he was instructed not to enter into any agreement which might be construed as prohibiting His Majesty's Government from requesting the Chinese Government not to facilitate or permit the return of the Dalai Lama to Thibet, as circumstances might make it opportune or desirable for His Majesty's Government to do this.

To Sir A. Nicolson, No. 150, Telegraphic, July 19, 1906.

Sir A. Nicolson, No. 159, Telegraphic, July 20, No. 467, July 21, 1906.

It has since been ascertained from the Chinese Government that there was no desire on their part that the Dalai Lama should return to Thibet; and on the 19th October Sir J. Jordan reported that they had taken steps to take him to Kanchan, Kansu Province, to remove him from Russian influence.

Mr. Carnegie, No. 141, Tel., July 21, 1906.

Sir J. Jordan, No. 194, Tel., October 19, 1906.

M. Isvolsky confidentially informed Sir A. Nicolson on the 19th November that the Dalai Lama was at Gumbum, and that the Russian Government had let him know that his return to Thibet was at present undesirable. He added that he had heard the Chinese were urging the Dalai Lama to return to Thibet, as he was found to be an inconvenient guest. M. Dorgieff has recently been at St. Petersburg, and it appears that he has been in communication with the Dalai Lama.

Sir A. Nicolson, No. 295, Telegraphic, November 19, 1906.

2. Article 2 of the British Demands.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 147,
Telegraphic,
July 16, 1906.

With regard to the word "disturbed" in point 2 of the British demands Sir A. Nicolson was instructed that the meaning would be made quite clear by the expansion of the last five words into "disturbed by the intervention of any other Power such as the establishment of a Protectorate or special Treaty relations."

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 467,
July 21, 1906.

This he pointed out to the Russian Government.

M. Isvolsky observed that this explanation undoubtedly rendered the meaning of the phrase perfectly clear, but he said he should like to recast the whole sentence referring to the question. He observed that the other points to which the Russian Government were quite prepared to subscribe fully, in regard to the suzerainty of China, abstention from interference, &c., seemed to him a sufficient safeguard against any Power desiring to establish a Protectorate or special Treaty Regulations.

3. Spiritual Relations between the Russian Buriats and Lhasa.

Viceroy of
India,
July 13, 1906.

With regard to the question of spiritual relations, the Government of India, to whom the question was referred, considered that no deputation of Russian Representatives to Thibet should in any circumstances be allowed. It was impossible in a case like Thibet to draw a distinction between religious and political matters, and the presence of a Representative would lead to all the troubles which it was one of the main objects of Colonel Younghusband's Mission to avert. There was no desire to prevent *bonâ fide* Buriat pilgrims from visiting holy places in Thibet, in accordance with past practice. They could not see, however, why such visits should necessitate any relations between Thibet and Russia, which was not, like India, on the Thibetan boundary, but was separated from the holy places by over 1,000 miles of desert and inhospitable country. In the event of interference with Buriat pilgrims the proper course would be to address the Chinese Government.

Sir A. Nicolson was instructed accordingly.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 145,
July 16, 1906.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 326,
July 17, 1906.

In the course of a conversation with Sir C. Hardinge M. Poklevsky informed him that the usual means of communication between the Russian Buriats and the Dalai Lama before the dispatch of the British Mission to Lhasa had been by pilgrims, who conveyed money and presents to the Lama. The Russian Government only desired the continuance of this system, and had no wish to have an Agent at Lhasa since His Majesty's Government had no intention of appointing one.

On the 20th July Sir A. Nicolson informed M. Isvolsky of the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject, the latter stated that he would like the relations between the Russian Buriats and the spiritual Chief in Thibet to remain as before, but without any Agent at Lhasa.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 159,
Telegraphic,
July 20, 1906.
Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 467,
July 21, 1906.

4. Scientific Missions.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 146,
Telegraphic,
July 16, 1906.
To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 326,
July 17, 1906.

It was pointed out to M. Poklevsky, of the Russian Embassy, by Sir C. Hardinge that the Russian Government could hardly expect that His Majesty's Government would agree to Russian Missions exploring in Thibet when British Missions were prohibited from doing so. M. Poklevsky admitted that the reply in the House of Commons that Sven Hedin had been refused permission to enter Thibet from India, would make it easier for the Russian Government to reply to associations wishing to send Missions.

In the course of a conversation Count Benckendorff informed Sir E. Grey that the Russian Government would, he thought, be prepared to agree to a proposal, if made by His Majesty's Government, that no scientific Missions organized by, or composed of, Russian or British subjects, should be allowed to enter Thibet for

five years, and that when that time had expired the matter should be further considered.

The Government of India were communicated with, but were opposed to any arrangement which might hamper their dealings in regard to Thibet. It was pointed out to them that their refusal to consider the suggestion thrown out by the Russian Ambassador would be inconsistent with the general policy of His Majesty's Government towards Thibet, and would not conduce to the success of the negotiations now proceeding with Russia.

It was therefore decided to make the proposal to the Russian Government; but Sir A. Nicolson was at the same time instructed to avoid language committing His Majesty's Government to the principle that Russia was entitled to claim equality of treatment with Great Britain in Thibet.

In an interview with Sir A. Nicolson M. Isvolsky had informed him that he did not wish that in the Agreement which might eventually be drawn up the exclusion of Russian officials from Thibet should be specifically mentioned. The end might be obtained by an exchange of notes, or some other means. He thought that it would be well if both Governments agreed to have no direct relations with the Thibetan Government except through the intermediary of the Suzerain Power. He did not, of course, intend to suggest any modification of the special Treaty provisions which existed with respect to our intercourse in connection with the trade marts.

5. *The Sense in which the term Thibet should be Interpreted.*

The Government of India were consulted as to whether the expression Thibet should be used in a geographical sense, or as indicating what M. Isvolsky described as an "administrative unit." They were at the same time requested to give some definition of the geographical area understood by His Majesty's Government in the word "Thibet."

On the 13th July they replied that in their view Thibet included the whole of the geographical area known as Thibet lying to the south of the Kuenlun range, and extending on the north and east to tracts near Tsaidam, directly under Chinese administration and the provinces of China proper. They stated that the whole tract thus defined was within the plenary and autonomous jurisdiction of the Thibet authorities, so far as any jurisdiction could be exercised over the northern portion, which is uninhabited during the greater part of the year save by wandering hunters and gold-seekers. Upper Tsaidam and Western Thaiji also formed part of Thibetan territory.

If by "administrative unit" M. Isvolsky intended to indicate that Thibet was one of the ordinary provinces of China, the Government of India were unable to admit the contention. They regarded Thibet as a feudatory State under Chinese suzerainty, with large autonomous powers, and power to conclude Treaties with coterminous States regarding mutual trade, frontiers, &c.

This information was communicated to Sir A. Nicolson, and he was instructed that the negotiations must be held to apply to the area geographically known as Thibet.

Sir A. Nicolson subsequently reported that M. Isvolsky had suggested that the geographical limits of Thibet should be considered those recognized as such by China.

6. *Mongolia.*

The question of Mongolia was also touched upon in the course of the negotiations.

M. Poklevsky asked Sir C. Hardinge what was thought of Russian action there. He was informed that, as the result of carefully watching Russian action in Urga,

where there was an energetic Consul-General, with, it was believed, an escort composed of three arms, it had long been felt that the Russian Government contemplated some action in that region, although His Majesty's Government felt convinced that Russia had now no desire for a policy of adventure, it seemed beyond doubt that there was still a certain party in Russia in favour of a policy of absorption in Mongolia, more especially as Manchuria no longer offered a favourable ground for a forward policy in that direction.

M. Poklevsky emphasized the fact that the Russian Government were very anxious for the maintenance of the *status quo* in Mongolia, and inquired whether His Majesty's Government could agree to some principle in accordance with the terms of the Japanese alliance. Sir C. Hardinge expressed his confidence that the *status quo* in Mongolia would be in entire accordance with the views of His Majesty's Government, and that the Japanese alliance had been expressly made to insure the maintenance of the *status quo* in Asia. M. Poklevsky mentioned that there were Japanese emissaries in Mongolia encouraging the Chinese authorities to tighten their hold over the Administration, and that such a policy would inevitably end in a conflict with the Mongol Princes.

It was subsequently pointed out to the Russian Ambassador that the Chinese could not be expected to bind themselves not to do what they pleased in their own territory. All that His Majesty's Government could do would be to give diplomatic assistance to get the Chinese Government to recognize the Russian frontier, and to abstain from interference with it. In this the Japanese Government might also assist. Count Benckendorff was told that any proposals which the Russian Government might make in connection with the *status quo* in Mongolia would receive the careful consideration of His Majesty's Government.

M. Dorgieff has recently been in St. Petersburg in regard to Mongolia. It is believed that the Russians are anxious to keep the Dalai Lama at Gumbum in order to utilize his influence over the Mongols. M. Dorgieff had left a Secretary with the Lama.

On the 5th January, 1907, M. Isvolsky inquired whether His Majesty's Government would be disposed to make some reference to the maintenance of the *status quo* in Mongolia when the general bases of the Agreement had been settled. Sir A. Nicolson replied that this was a perfectly new suggestion and he could give no reply, but that he would refer home for instructions. M. Isvolsky begged him not to do so at present, as he had merely thrown the proposal out as a suggestion.⁽⁵⁾

On the 8th October Sir A. Nicolson telegraphed a summary of the Russian draft Convention which had been handed to him by M. Isvolsky.⁽⁶⁾

Articles I, III, IV and V were found to be identical with those contained in the British draft.

(5) [For the later history of this negotiation with reference to Mongolia, and the project of a Mongolian frontier formula, *v. supra*, pp. 284-6, Nos. 262-3, and *Ed. notes*.]

(6) [The actual text of this draft was sent home by Sir A. Nicolson in his despatch No. 677 of October 8, R. October 15. It is as follows:

F.O. 371/177.

Art[icle] 1. Les deux Hautes Parties contractantes reconnaissant les droits suzerains de la Chine sur le Thibet, s'engagent à respecter l'intégrité territoriale du Thibet, et à s'abstenir de toute ingérence (intervention) dans son administration intérieure.

Art[icle] 2. Se conformant au principe admis de la suzeraineté de la Chine sur le Thibet, la Russie et la Grande Bretagne s'engagent à ne traiter avec le Thibet, que par l'entremise du Gouvernement Chinois. Cet engagement n'exclut pas toutefois les rapports directs des agents commerciaux anglais avec les autorités thibétaines locales, prévus par la convention de 1904 entre la Grande Bretagne et le Thibet. Il est bien entendu que les bouddhistes tant sujets russes, que britanniques conservent le droit d'entrer en relations directes sur le terrain religieux avec le Dalai Lama et les autres représentants du bouddhisme au Thibet.

Art[icle] 3. Les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe s'engagent chacun pour sa part à ne pas envoyer de représentants à Lhassa,

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 770,
November 19,
1906.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 4,
Telegraphic,
January 5, 1907.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 260,
Telegraphic,
October 8, 1906.

In regard to Article II, however, the alternative proposed by M. Isvolsky runs as follows :—

“In conformity with the recognized principle of the suzerainty of China over Thibet, Great Britain and Russia mutually engage not to treat with Thibet except through intermediary of Chinese Government. This engagement does not exclude the direct relations between the British commercial agents and local Thibetan authorities provided for in the Convention of 1904 between Great Britain and Thibet. It is clearly understood that Buddhists, whether Russian or British subjects, retain the right of having direct relations on religious matters with the Dalai Lama and other representatives of Buddhism in Thibet.”

Spiritual relations with Lhasa.

Sir A. Nicolson pointed out that there was no allusion in this Article to the special interests of Great Britain as regards the foreign relations of Thibet.

He stated that M. Isvolsky had at the same time handed him a Memorandum as to the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley, suggesting that it might be well to mention in the Agreement the temporary character of that occupation.⁽⁷⁾

Occupation of Chumbi Valley.

The India Office were asked for their observations in regard to Article II proposed by M. Isvolsky, and also as to the suggestion respecting the Chumbi Valley.

They replied that, as pointed out by Sir A. Nicolson, the Russian Article II not only suppressed all allusion to the special interests of Great Britain as regards foreign relations in Thibet, but by providing that Great Britain, save in respect of local communications under the terms of the Lhasa Convention, shall not treat with Thibet except through the Chinese Government, it placed a restriction on the liberty of action of His Majesty's Government which was not imposed by the Chinese Adhesion Convention. Neither the Lhasa Convention of 1904 nor the Adhesion Convention of 1906 bound His Majesty's Government not to deal direct with the Thibetan Government in the event of the infringement by the latter of the terms of the Lhasa Convention.

India Office, October 17, 1906.

Communication with Thibetan authorities.

Art[icle] 4. Les deux Hautes Parties s'engagent à ne rechercher ou obtenir, ni pour leur propre compte, ni en faveur de leurs sujets, aucunes concessions de chemins de fer, routes, télégraphes et mines, ou autres droits au Thibet.

Art[icle] 5. Les deux Gouvernements sont d'accord qu'aucune partie des revenus du Thibet, soit en nature, soit en espèces ne peut être engagée ou assignée tant à la Russie et à la Grande Bretagne qu'à leurs sujets.]

(7) [The text of this Pro-Memoria was as follows :

F.O. 371/177.

Pro-Memoriâ.

En vertu de la déclaration, promulg[u]ée par le Vice-Roi des Indes le 11 Novembre 1904 conjointement à la ratification de la Convention du 7 Septembre 1904, l'évacuation de la vallée de Chumbi par les forces britanniques se trouve subordonnée à l'exacte observation par le Thibet de la convention précitée.

D'autre part la nécessité de maintenir l'intégrité du territoire thibétain et de s'abstenir de toute ingérence dans les affaires intérieures du pays a été pleinement reconnue au cours des pourparlers entre les Gouvernements Russe et Anglais au sujet du Thibet. Ce principe en outre a été explicitement formulé à l'article II de la Convention entre la Grande Bretagne et la Chine du 27 Avril 1906.

Toutefois, la stricte observation par les thibétains de la Convention de 1904 ne saurait présenter le caractère d'une certitude absolue et si peu probable que paraisse en lui-même le fait d'une infraction de leur part aux engagements pris, il semblerait nécessaire d'en considérer les conséquences que pourrait impliquer la prolongation *sine die* de l'occupation de la vallée de Chumbi contrairement au principe admis de l'intégrité du Thibet. Dès lors il serait peut-être utile de préciser dans l'accord sur la question thibétaine le caractère temporaire de l'occupation de la vallée de Chumbi.]

Buddhists.

The last sentence of the Russian Article as to religious relations between Buddhists, whether Russian or British subjects, and the Dalai Lama, seemed to require consideration in connection with Article 3 of the British draft Agreement with a view to safeguarding as far as possible the religious relations between the Russian Buriats and Lhasa from being utilized for political purposes.

Chumbi.

With regard to the temporary occupation of the Chumbi Valley, the India Office saw no objection to repeating in the Russian Agreement what had been said on the subject in connection with the ratification of the Lhasa Convention, and accepted by the Chinese Government in the Adhesion Convention. At the same time, in view of the explicit declarations already made by His Majesty's Government, the India Office saw no necessity for doing this.

To India Office,
October 6,
1906.

It was suggested, in reply, that Sir A. Nicolson might be instructed to point out that Article I of the Adhesion Convention of the 27th April, 1906, provides that both Great Britain and China "engage to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified" in the Lhasa Convention of the 7th September, 1904, and to inform the Russian Government that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the direct relations between the British commercial agents and the Tibetan local authorities, which are allowed by Article II of the Russian draft, should extend to and include communications through the Tibetan local authorities with the Tibetan Government, should any such become necessary, with regard to the observance by Tibet of the Lhasa Convention. Words to that effect should, therefore, be inserted in the Article, in order that there should be no room for misunderstanding. It was further proposed to add that, in view of the fact that, except as regards China and various native States, the frontiers of Tibet were continuous only with those of India, His Majesty's Government attached importance to the retention in the Article of words recognizing the special interest of Great Britain as regards the foreign relations of Tibet.

*Buriats and
Dalai Lama.*

With regard to the question of communications between the Buriats and the Dalai Lama, it was proposed to instruct Sir A. Nicolson to endeavour to procure acceptance by the Russian Government of words to the effect that the two Governments would take such steps as might be necessary and possible to prevent these communications from assuming any political character.

It was pointed out that such an addition would give His Majesty's Government considerably stronger grounds for making representations to the Russian Government if it appeared that political communications were passing through the instrumentality of the pilgrims.

The India Office replied that they concurred generally in the instructions which it was proposed to send to Sir A. Nicolson, with certain slight alterations.

Sir A. Nicolson was accordingly instructed to inform M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government had carefully considered the proposals put forward by the Russian Government with regard to Article II of the draft Convention. He should point out that Article I of the Adhesion Convention of the 27th April, 1906, provides that both Great Britain and China "engage to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified" in the Lhasa Convention of the 7th September, 1904, and that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, Article V of the latter Convention secures to them the right to send letters through the British Agent mentioned in that Article to the Tibetan Government as well as to the Tibetan local authorities. He was therefore to propose the omission of the word "locales" after the words "autorités Thibétaines" in the Russian draft, and the addition, at the end of the sentence, of a reference to the Convention of the 27th April, 1906, with China.

Sir Arthur was also to state that, in view of the fact that, except as regards China, the frontiers of Tibet are continuous only with those of the Indian Empire, His Majesty's Government attached importance to the retention in the Article of words recognizing the special interest of Great Britain with regard to the foreign relations of Tibet. He was further to propose the addition to the last sentence of

India Office,
November 14,
1906.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 536,
December 5,
1906.

*Communication
with Tibetan
authorities.*

the Russian draft of words to the effect that no communications between Great Britain and Russia and any Thibetan authority should pass through the instrumentality of Buddhist pilgrims, and that the two Governments would take such steps as were necessary and possible to prevent the relations of British and Russian Buddhists with the representatives of Buddhism in Thibet from assuming a political character. Special stress was laid on the desirability of obtaining the acceptance of these words by the Russian Government. No objection was raised to the proposal to deal with the questions of scientific expeditions to Thibet and the exclusion of Russian officials from that country by an exchange of notes rather than by a clause in the Convention itself; nor was there any reason to object to the proposal to repeat in the Russian Agreement what had been accepted by the Chinese Government on the subject of the occupation of the Chumbi Valley in the Adhesion Convention.

In accordance with these instructions, Sir A. Nicolson prepared a fresh draft of Article II, which he forwarded to the Foreign Office for consideration.^(*)

The India Office were consulted and agreed to the draft with the exception of the words "It is understood that" in the third paragraph, which they changed to "It is recognized that it may be necessary for." Sir Arthur therefore communicated the revised draft to M. Isvolsky. His attitude was satisfactory, but he demurred to certain passages, especially paragraph 2 regarding Great Britain's special interests in Thibet. After some discussion, he suggested that the paragraph might come out and be inserted as a preamble, if the word "disturb" were eliminated or modified.

Sir Arthur, therefore, drew up a formula, which he sent home by telegraph on the 7th January.

This draft was approved, but before the telegram saying so had reached Sir Arthur, M. Isvolsky had handed him a draft preamble, a slight modification of Article I, and a modified version of Article II.^(*)

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 3,
Telegraphic,
January 6, 1907.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 5, Tel,
January 7, 1907.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 6, Tel.,
January 15,
1907.

^(*) [Enclosed in his despatch No. 834 of December 26, 1906, R. January 7. The wording was as follows :

F.O. 371/382.

Proposed Article II of the Draft Convention respecting Thibet.

In conformity with the principle of the suzerainty of China over Thibet, Russia and Great Britain severally engage not to enter into negotiations with Thibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. This engagement does not exclude the direct relations between British Commercial Agents and the Thibetan Authorities as provided for in Article V of the Convention between Great Britain and Thibet of September 7th 1904 and confirmed by the Convention between Great Britain and China of April 27th 1906; nor does it modify the engagements taken by Great Britain and China in Article I of the said Convention of 1906.

Russia Recognises that by reason of its geographical position Great Britain has a special interest in seeing that the external relations of Thibet are not disturbed by the intervention of any other Power.

It is understood that British and Russian Buddhists may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and other Buddhist representatives in Thibet. At the same time Great Britain and Russia severally engage to take such steps as may be necessary and possible to prevent the relations between British and Russian Buddhists with the representatives of Buddhism in Thibet from assuming a political character; and they also engage that no communications between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia, or their agents, and any Thibetan authority should pass through the instrumentality of Buddhist pilgrims into Thibet.]

^(*) [The text of these revised drafts was sent home by Sir A. Nicolson in his despatch No. 81 of January 15, R. January 21. It is as follows :

F.O. 371/382.

Preamble and Articles I and II of Draft Thibetan Convention.—(Communicated informally by M. Isvolski, January 2/15, 1907.)

Les Gouvernements de Russie et de la Grande-Bretagne reconnaissant les droits suzerains de la Chine sur le Tibet et considérant que par suite de sa situation géographique la Grande Bretagne a un intérêt spécial à voir le régime actuel des relations extérieures de Tibet intégralement maintenu, sont convenus de l'accord suivant.

ARTICLE I.

Les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes s'engagent à respecter l'intégrité territoriale du Tibet et à s'abstenir de toute ingérence dans son administration intérieure.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 31,
January 15,
1907.

In M. Isvolsky's new draft the second paragraph of Sir Arthur's draft was eliminated, and its place taken by the preamble. Paragraph 1 of Sir Arthur's draft was accepted; but paragraph 3 was considerably modified. The words "Il est bien entendu" were substituted for "it is recognized that it may be necessary for," and the clause at the end of the paragraph, stipulating that no communications between Great Britain or Russia and the Thibetan authorities shall pass through the Buddhist pilgrims, has been eliminated. M. Isvolsky gave as his reason for removing this paragraph that as the Russian Government undertake in the first paragraph of the Article not to enter into negotiations with Thibet except through the Chinese Government, they will not, if they observe the terms of the Convention, communicate through the Buddhist pilgrims.

M. Isvolsky's proposals have been sent to the India Office for their consideration, and at the same time they have been informed that, in the opinion of Sir E. Grey, the text now offered by the Russian Government appears to offer security against undue foreign interference in Thibet, and without being absolutely prohibitive to cover all the ground desired by the India Office.

*Scientific
Missions.*

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 18,
January 6, 1907.

M. Isvolsky seemed very unwilling to forbid the dispatch of scientific missions to Thibet. He said that he did not see how he should be able to justify it to the Russian Geographical Society. He then inquired as to our view regarding the boundaries of Thibet, and said that we should have to define them, in order to know what was forbidden ground and what not. Sir A. Nicolson replied that he thought we had agreed to take as Thibet the country recognized by China as such.

Sir J. Jordan,
No. 17,
Telegraphic,
January 21,
1907.

M. Isvolsky replied that the Chinese did not seem to have very clear and positive ideas on the subject. This is perfectly true, as, in reply to Sir J. Jordan's inquiry regarding the boundaries of Thibet, Tong replied that he was ignorant of those to the north and east. He promised to make inquiries and let us know, but he was not able to obtain any precise information, and it was decided to accept as the boundaries of Thibet those laid down by the India Office.

Chumbi Valley.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 35,
Jan. 16, 1907.

Sir A. Nicolson drew up a formula repeating the Declaration annexed to the ratification of the Convention of 1904, and it was proposed that this Declaration should form an Annex to the present Agreement.⁽¹⁰⁾ Sir A. Nicolson's draft was sent

ARTICLE II.

Se conformant au principe admis de la suzeraineté de la Chine sur le Tibet, la Russie et la Grande Bretagne s'engagent à ne traiter avec le Tibet que par l'entremise du Gouvernement Chinois. Cet engagement n'exclut par toutefois les rapports des agents commerciaux anglais avec les autorités tibétaines prévus par l'article V de la convention du 7 Septembre 1904 entre la Grande Bretagne et le Tibet et confirmés par la Convention du 27 avril 1906 entre la Grande Bretagne et la Chine; il ne modifie pas non plus les engagements assumés par la Grande Bretagne et la Chine en vertu de l'article I de la dite Convention de 1906.

Il est bien entendu que les bouddhistes tant sujets russes que britanniques peuvent entrer en relations directes sur le terrain strictement religieux avec le Dalai Lama et les autres représentants du bouddhisme au Tibet; les Gouvernements de Russie et de la Grande Bretagne s'engagent pour autant qu'il dépendra d'eux à ne pas admettre que ces relations puissent porter atteinte aux stipulations du présent accord.]

(10) [The text was enclosed in Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 35 of January 16, R. January 21, and is as follows:

F.O. 371/382.

Annexe to the Convention between Great Britain and Russia regarding Thibet.

Great Britain reaffirms the declaration, signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and appended to the ratified Convention of September 7, 1904, to the effect that the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley shall cease after the due payment of the three annual instalments of the indemnity of 25,00,000 rupees, and provided that the trade marts as stipulated in Article II of the Convention shall have been effectively opened for three years, and that in the meantime the Thibetans shall have faithfully complied with the terms of the said Convention of 1904 in all other respects.]

to the India Office, who approved it, and his Excellency presented it to the Russian Government.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 30, Tel.,
Feb. 20, 1907.

After consultation with the India Office, it was agreed to accept Articles I and II as proposed by M. Isvolsky, but preference was expressed for the preamble drafted by Sir Arthur over that proposed by the Russian Government, for the reason that the Russian draft only indicated that we possessed a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in Thibet, whereas we claim that in consequence of our geographical position, we have a special interest in the external relations of Thibet generally.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 10,
Telegraphic,
February 8,
1907.

The Russian Government expressed their willingness to accept the British preamble, and thus the whole Convention was agreed to by both sides. It was proposed to treat the question of the prohibition of the entry of scientific missions into Thibet by an exchange of notes; and a note was drafted in conjunction with the India Office whereby, in return for a similar undertaking on the part of the Russian Government, His Majesty's Government agreed not to permit any mission organized by or composed of British subjects designed for the purpose of scientific investigation to enter Thibet. His Majesty's Government would also undertake to request the Chinese Government to prohibit so far as lay in their power the entry of similar expeditions into Thibet from the north and west. This undertaking was to hold good for five years, at the expiration of which time His Majesty's Government, in consultation with the Russian Government, would consider the advisability of extending the prohibition for a further period.⁽¹¹⁾

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 23,
Telegraphic,
February 21,
1907.

This proposal was submitted to M. Isvolsky, who informed Sir A. Nicolson that though personally in agreement with it as to the inadvisability of scientific missions proceeding to Thibet, for the present he found that much opposition to such a measure would be aroused in Russia, and that he would be severely attacked if the prohibition were announced in such a formal manner. He could and would prevent missions from being organized, but this was different from publicly announcing that they were prohibited. He promised, however, to look into the matter, and try and discover whether the desired end could be attained by a different method.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 33,
Telegraphic,
February 23,
1907.

In Sir A. Nicolson's original instructions, he was to obtain the consent of the Russian Government to a declaration that His Majesty's Government were unable to admit the presence in Thibet of Russian officials in any capacity whatever. Considerable objection was raised to this point by M. Isvolsky, as has been recorded above, and Sir A. Nicolson submitted that in view of the guarantees afforded by

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 60,
January 3, 1907.

(¹¹) [The draft note of February 1907 was in the following terms :

F.O. 371/382.

Draft Note for communication to the Russian Government by Sir A. Nicolson.

M. le Ministre,

February , 1907.

With reference to the Convention signed this day respecting Tibet, I am authorized by H[is] B[ritannic] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] to state that they undertake not to allow, for a period of five years from the date of this communication, the entry into Thibet of any Mission organized by, or composed of, British subjects, designed for the purpose of scientific investigation, provided, however, that a similar undertaking is given by the Russian Gov[ernment] in regard to the entry into Tibet of any scientific mission organized by, or composed of, Russian subjects. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] further undertake to request the Chinese Gov[ernment] to prohibit, for the same period, so far as lies in their power, any scientific expeditions of any foreign nationality from entering Tibet from the North and East, on the understanding that similar action is taken by the Russian Gov[ernment]. At the expiration of five years, His Majesty's Gov[ernment] will consider, in consultation with the Russian Gov[ernment], the advisability, or otherwise of extending this prohibition for a further period.

For the purposes of the present undertaking Tibet shall be held to include the whole of the geographical area known as Tibet lying to the south of the Kuenlan and Naushan ranges, and extending on the north and east to tracts near Tsaidam directly under Chinese administration and the provinces of China proper. Upper Tsaidam and Western Thaiji shall also be held to form part of Tibetan territory.

I have, &c.]

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 23, Tel.,
Feb 21, 1907.

the Convention itself, it was unnecessary to obtain a specific stipulation against the entry of all Russian officials into Thibet. Sir Arthur's suggestion was approved, and it was agreed that a specific stipulation was unnecessary.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 100,
February 20,
1907.

The Russian version of the draft Convention has now been received, and it appears to be in conformity with our version with the exception of Article II, paragraph 2. The French text contains the words "relations directes," whereas the English has simply "relations." It is proposed to include the word "direct" in the English version to make it correspond with the French.⁽¹²⁾

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 53,
Telegraphic,
March 28, 1907.

The question of the prohibition of scientific missions has also been arranged, and a draft note submitted by M. Isvolsky has been accepted. This note is similar to the English draft, but limits the admission of scientific missions to three years instead of five.⁽¹³⁾

The matter is thus settled with the exception of—

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 54,
Telegraphic,
March 28, 1907.

1. The Russian Government signified their willingness to accept the draft Annex regarding the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley, but suggested that

(12) [The Russian draft sent by Sir A. Nicolson on February 20 was as follows :
F.O. 371/382.

Pro-memoriâ communicated by M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie serait prêt à accepter l'accord avec le Gouvernement Britannique sur la question Tibétaine dans les termes du projet remis par S[on] E[xc]ellence] Sir Arthur Nicolson le 1/14 février courant dont un texte français se trouve ci-joint.

Toutefois avant de considérer la présente question comme définitivement réglée, le Gouvernement Impérial tiendrait à connaître les vues du Gouvernement Britannique sur la durée de l'occupation de la vallée de Chumbi (*pro-memoriâ* du 25 septembre 1906) ainsi que sur l'autorisation aux explorateurs et savants russes de voyager en territoire Tibétain dans des buts exclusivement scientifiques.

Le 6 (19) Février, 1907.

Draft.

En raison de l'intérêt spécial que par suite de sa situation géographique la Grande Bretagne a dans les relations extérieures du Tibet et en vue du désir de la Grande Bretagne et de la Russie d'arriver à un accord à ce sujet les deux Hautes Parties contractantes sont convenues des articles suivants.

ARTICLE I.

Les deux Hautes Parties contractantes s'engagent à respecter l'intégrité territoriale du Tibet et à s'abstenir de toute ingérence dans son administration intérieure.

ARTICLE II.

Se conformant au principe de la suzeraineté de la Chine sur le Tibet la Russie et la Grande Bretagne s'engagent à ne traiter avec le Tibet que par l'entremise du Gouvernement Chinois. Cet engagement n'exclut pas toutefois les rapports des agents commerciaux anglais avec les autorités tibétaines prévus par l'article V de la convention du 7 septembre 1904 entre la Grande Bretagne et le Tibet et confirmés par la Convention du 27 avril 1906 entre la Grande Bretagne et la Chine; il ne modifie pas non plus les engagements assurés par la Grande Bretagne et la Chine en vertu de l'article I de la dite Convention de 1906.

Il est bien entendu que les bouddhistes tant sujets russes que britanniques peuvent entrer en relations directes sur le terrain strictement religieux avec le Dalai Lama et les autres représentants du bouddhisme au Tibet; les Gouvernements de Russie et de la Grande Bretagne s'engagent pour autant qu'il dépendra d'eux à ne pas admettre que ces relations puissent porter atteinte aux stipulations du présent accord.

ARTICLE III.

Les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe s'engagent chacun pour sa part à ne pas envoyer de représentants à Lhassa.

ARTICLE IV.

Les Deux Hautes Parties s'engagent à ne rechercher ou obtenir, ni pour leur propre compte, ni en faveur de leurs sujets aucunes concessions de chemins de fer, routes, télégraphes et mines, ou autres droits, au Tibet.

ARTICLE V.

Les deux Gouvernements sont d'accord qu'aucune partie des revenus du Tibet, soit en nature, soit en espèces, ne peut être engagée ou assignée tant à la Russie et à la Grande Bretagne qu'à leurs sujets.]

(13) [*cp. infra*, p. 352, No. 316, *encl. 5.*]

a clause should be added providing that, in the event of anything occurring to prevent the evacuation, the definitive term of the evacuation should be the subject of friendly negotiation between the two Governments. His Majesty's Government are prepared to accept the draft with the omission of the words providing for a discussion regarding the definitive term of the evacuation, and Sir A. Nicolson has been instructed to point out to the Russian Government that the evacuation of the Chumbi Valley is entirely dependent on the fulfilment by the Thibetans of our Convention of 1904, and that it would be quite impossible that we should agree to discuss with another Power the question whether the stipulations of that Convention had been complied with. Sir Arthur was also to point out that His Majesty's Government had no reason to anticipate that the terms of the Convention will not be carried out, and they sincerely desired that the date of evacuation will not be retarded at all. A draft containing the paragraph suggested by the Russian Government with the omission of the last five words will be handed to M. Isvolsky.⁽¹⁴⁾

2. The question of an understanding respecting the status of Russian traders in Thibet, which has been raised by M. Isvolsky. Sir Arthur has been instructed not to recur to the matter again unless M. Isvolsky revives it. In the event of his Excellency doing so, Sir Arthur will request a written statement of his views.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 83,
Jan. 12, 1907.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 28, Tel.,
Feb. 25, 1907.

3. Sir A. Nicolson has been instructed to inform M. Isvolsky that we prefer not to import into the negotiations subjects such as Mongolia, which have no direct bearing on the question of Thibet, but that in any case we could not go further than to say that we are prepared to recognize Russia's special interest in the districts of Mongolia coterminous with the Russian frontier. Before we did so, however, we should require that the special interests and the area to which they extend were defined.

To Sir A.
Nicolson.
No. 11,
Telegraphic,
February 8,
1907.

4. The boundaries of Thibet. These were laid down as the country lying south of the Kuenlan and Nanshan ranges, and extending on the north and east to tracts near Tsaidam directly under Chinese administration and the provinces of China proper. Upper Tsaidam and Western Thaiji were also considered part of Thibet. M. Isvolsky stated that in his opinion these limits were rather extended, and he suggested that we should accept the Chinese boundaries of Thibet as delimiting its area. An opportunity for inquiring would present itself when we approached the Chinese Government in order to obtain their consent to prohibiting the entry into Thibet of scientific missions.

To Sir A.
Nicolson,
No. 23,
Telegraphic,
February 21,
1907.

Foreign Office, April 18, 1907.

(14) [*v. infra*, pp. 349-50, No. 315.]

No. 315.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/382.

(No. 219.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 22, 1907.

R. April 29, 1907.

With reference to your despatch No. 145 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an *aide-mémoire* which I left with M. Isvolsky this afternoon in reply to the memorandum which His Excellency had communicated to me respecting the British occupation of the Chumbi valley.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 315.

Aide-mémoire communicated to Russian Government, April 9 (22), 1907.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy had the honour to receive the Memorandum in which it was suggested that a paragraph should be added to the annex to the Thibetan Convention regarding the occupation of the Chumbi valley. The paragraph in question was to the effect that if the occupation for some cause or another were prolonged over the specified period "les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe entreront dans un échange de vues amical concernant le terme définitif de l'évacuation."

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy is authorized to accept this additional paragraph provided that the words "concernant le terme définitif de l'évacuation" are omitted.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy would wish to point out that the evacuation of the Chumbi valley is entirely dependent on the fulfilment by the Thibetan Government of the Convention of 1904, and it is clear that H[is] B[ritannic] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] could not agree to discuss with another Power whether the stipulations of the Convention of 1904 had been complied with.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy is, however, enabled to state that there is no reason to anticipate that the stipulations will not be fulfilled, and that H[is] B[ritannic] M[ajesty's] Government are sincerely desirous that the date of the evacuation should not in any way be retarded.

No. 316.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/382.

(No. 241.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 2, 1907.

R. May 13, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit, herewith, copy of an *Aide Mémoire*, with its enclosure, which I have received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs stating that the Russian Government agree to the omission of the words "concernant le terme définitif de l'évacuation" from the Annexe to the Thibetan Convention concerning the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley. They wish to replace the above words by "à ce sujet" in order to complete the phrase, and it seems to me that this substitution is unobjectionable.

I had informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs verbally that His Majesty's Government accepted the terms of the Russian Draft note concerning scientific missions, but I have now communicated this assurance in an *Aide Mémoire* of which I beg leave to enclose a copy.

For convenience of reference I transmit copies of the Annexe to the Thibetan Convention, and also of the note concerning scientific missions in French and English, and I should be grateful if you would inform me if you would wish any corrections made in the English translations of the French text.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 316.

Aide-mémoire.

Le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères a eu l'honneur de recevoir l'aide mémoire de l'Ambassade Britannique en date du 10/23 avril c[ourant]⁽¹⁾ au sujet de l'occupation de la vallée de Chumby par les forces anglaises.

Prenant acte du désir énoncé par le Gouvernement Britannique de ne pas voir retardée la date fixée pour l'évacuation de cette partie du territoire thibétain, le

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, No. 315, *encl.* The date given there, April 9/22, is correct.]

Gouvernement Impérial est prêt à omettre dans le texte de l'annexe à la convention concernant le Thibet les mots " concernant le terme définitif de l'évacuation " en les remplaçant par " à ce sujet " pour compléter la phrase au point de vue de la rédaction. Le texte ainsi arrêté se trouve ci-joint.

En portant ce qui précède à la connaissance de l'Ambassade Britannique le Gouvernement Impérial aime à espérer qu'il pourra recevoir une réponse favorable quant au projet de note ayant trait aux expéditions scientifiques dans le Thibet et soumis à l'approbation du Cabinet de Londres.

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 20 Avril (3 Mai), 1907.

Enclosure 2 in No. 316.

Annexe à la Convention entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie concernant le Thibet.

La Grande Bretagne réaffirme la déclaration signée par S[on] E[xcellence] le Vice-Roi et Gouverneur-Général des Indes et annexée à la ratification de la Convention du 7 Septembre 1904, stipulant que l'occupation de la vallée de Chumby par les forces britanniques prendra fin après le paiement des trois annuités de 25,00,000 roupies, à condition que les places de marché mentionnées dans l'article II de la dite Convention soient effectivement ouvertes depuis trois ans, et que les autorités thibétaines durant cette période se conforment strictement sous tous les rapports aux termes de la dite Convention de 1904. Il est bien entendu que si l'occupation de la vallée de Chumby par les forces britanniques n'aura pas pris fin pour quelque raison que ce soit, à l'époque prévue par la déclaration précitée, les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe entreront dans un échange de vues amical à ce sujet.

Enclosure 3 in No. 316.

Aide-mémoire.—(Communicated May 4, 1907.)

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the *Aide-Mémoire* of the 20th April/3 May, stating that the Imperial Gov[ernmen]t are willing to omit the words " concernant le terme définitif de l'évacuation " from the text of the annexe to the Convention regarding Thibet.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy begs leave to inform the Imp[erial] Min[ister] for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] accept the text of the note regarding scientific expeditions to Thibet, which was communicated by the Imperial Gov[ernmen]t in the *Pro Memoria* of March 13/26, 1907.

Enclosure 4 in No. 316.

Draft Annexe to Thibet Convention.

La Grande Bretagne réaffirme la déclaration signée par Son Excellence le Viceroy et Gouverneur-Général des Indes et annexée à la ratification de la Convention du 7 septembre 1904, stipulant que l'occupation de la vallée de Chumby par les forces britanniques prendra fin après le paiement des trois annuités de 25,00,000 roupies, à condition que les places de marché mentionnées dans l'article II de la dite Convention soient effectivement

Great Britain reaffirms the declaration signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, appended to the ratified Convention of September 7, 1904 and stipulating that the British occupation of the Chumbi valley shall cease after the due payment of the three annual instalments of the indemnity of 25,00,000 rupees, provided that the trade marts as mentioned in Article II of the said Convention shall

ouvertes depuis trois ans et que les autorités thibétaines durant cette période se conforment strictement sous tous les rapports aux termes de la dite Convention de 1904. Il est bien entendu que si l'occupation de la vallée de Chumby par les forces britanniques n'aura pas pris fin, pour quelque raison que ce soit, à l'époque prévue par la déclaration précitée, les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe entreranno dans un échange de vues amical à ce sujet.

have been effectively opened for three years, and that in the meantime the Thibetan authorities shall have faithfully complied with the terms of the said Convention of 1904 in all other respects. It is understood that if the occupation of the Chumby valley by the British forces shall not have terminated, for some reason or other, at the date indicated in the above-mentioned declaration, the British and Russian Governments will enter into a friendly interchange of views on the subject.

Enclosure 5 in No. 316.

Draft Project of Note.

Me référant à la Convention au sujet du Thibet, signée aujourd'hui, j'ai l'honneur de faire savoir à Votre Excellence la déclaration suivante.

Le Gouvernement Britannique juge utile, pour autant qu'il dépendra de lui, de ne pas admettre—sauf accord préalable avec le Gouvernement Russe—pour une durée de trois ans à partir de la date de la présente communication, l'entrée au Thibet d'une mission scientifique quelconque, à condition toutefois qu'une assurance pareille soit donnée de la part du Gouvernement Impérial de Russie.

Le Gouvernement Britannique se propose en outre de s'adresser au Gouvernement Chinois afin de faire agréer à ce dernier une obligation analogue pour une période correspondante : il va de soi que la même démarche sera faite par le Gouvernement Russe.

À l'expiration du terme précité, le Gouvernement Britannique avisera d'un commun accord avec le Gouvernement Russe à l'opportunité, s'il y a lieu, de mesures ultérieures à prendre concernant les expéditions scientifiques au Thibet.

With reference to the convention concerning Thibet signed to-day, I have the honour to make the following declaration to Your Excellency.

The British Government consider it to be desirable not to allow, without previous agreement with the Russian Government, and so far as it lies in their power, the entry of scientific missions into Thibet for a period of three years from the date of the present communication, on the understanding that a similar assurance is given by the Imperial Russian Government.

Furthermore, the British Government propose to address themselves to the Chinese Government with the view of obtaining the consent of the latter to a like undertaking for a corresponding period, always on the understanding that the Russian Government will take a similar step.

On the expiration of the above-mentioned term, the British Government will consider in accord with the Russian Government as to the expediency, should such exist, of further measures being adopted concerning scientific missions to Thibet.

[ED. NOTE.—The following is the text of the Anglo-Russian Arrangement concerning Thibet taken from the British original text, which was sent to Sir E. Grey by Sir A. Nicolson with his despatch No. 445 of August 31, 1907, R. September 3, *v. infra*, p. 502, No. 456. The preamble to the Convention is also printed there, as the Persian arrangement formed the first part of the Convention. The full text is printed *infra*, pp. 618-20, *Appendix I.*]

No. 317.

Arrangement concernant le Thibet.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie, reconnaissant les droits suzerains de la Chine sur le Thibet et considérant que par suite de sa situation

géographique la Grande Bretagne a un intérêt spécial à voir le régime actuel des relations extérieures du Thibet intégralement maintenu, sont convenus de l'arrangement suivant :

ARTICLE I.

Les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes s'engagent à respecter l'intégrité territoriale du Thibet et à s'abstenir de toute ingérence dans son administration intérieure.

ARTICLE II.

Se conformant au principe admis de la suzeraineté de la Chine sur le Thibet, la Grande Bretagne et la Russie s'engagent à ne traiter avec le Thibet que par l'entremise du Gouvernement Chinois. Cet engagement n'exclut pas toutefois les rapports directs des agents commerciaux anglais avec les autorités thibétaines prévus par l'article V de la convention du 7 Septembre 1904 entre la Grande Bretagne et le Thibet et confirmés par la convention du 27 Avril 1906 entre la Grande Bretagne et la Chine; il ne modifie pas non plus les engagements assumés par la Grande Bretagne et la Chine en vertu de l'article I de ladite convention de 1906.

Il est bien entendu que les bouddhistes tant sujets britanniques que russes peuvent entrer en relations directes sur le terrain strictement religieux avec le Dalai-Lama et les autres représentants du bouddhisme au Thibet; les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie s'engagent, pour autant qu'il dépendra d'eux, à ne pas admettre que ces relations puissent porter atteinte aux stipulations du présent arrangement.

ARTICLE III.

Les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe s'engagent, chacun pour sa part, à ne pas envoyer de Représentants à Lhassa.

ARTICLE IV.

Les deux Hautes Parties s'engagent à ne rechercher ou obtenir, ni pour leur propre compte, ni en faveur de leurs sujets, aucunes concessions de chemins de fer, routes, télégraphes et mines, ou autres droits au Thibet.

ARTICLE V.

Les deux Gouvernements sont d'accord qu'aucune partie des revenus du Thibet, soit en nature, soit en espèces, ne peut être engagée ou assignée tant à la Grande Bretagne et à la Russie qu'à leurs sujets.

Annexe à l'Arrangement entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie concernant le Thibet.

La Grande Bretagne réaffirme la déclaration signée par son Excellence le Vice-Roi et Gouverneur Général des Indes et annexée à la ratification de la convention du 7 septembre 1904, stipulant que l'occupation de la vallée de Chumbi par les forces britanniques prendra fin après le payement de trois annuités de l'indemnité de 25.00.000 roupies, à condition que les places de marché mentionnées dans l'article II de ladite convention aient été effectivement ouvertes depuis trois ans et que les autorités thibétaines durant cette période se soient conformées strictement sous tous les rapports aux termes de ladite convention de 1904. Il est bien entendu que si l'occupation de la vallée du Chumbi par les forces britanniques n'aura pas pris fin, pour quelque raison que ce soit, à l'époque prévue par la déclaration précitée, les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe entreranno dans un échange de vues amical à ce sujet.

La présente Convention sera ratifiée et les ratifications en seront échangées à St. Pétersbourg aussitôt que faire se pourra.⁽¹⁾

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé la présente convention et y ont apposé leurs cachets.

Fait à St. Pétersbourg, en double expédition, le 18/31 Août, 1907.

A. NICOLSON.
(L.S.)

ISWOLSKY.
(L.S.)

(¹) [Ratifications were exchanged on September 23. A formal communication of the text was made to the Great Powers on the 24th, to China on the 25th, and to the public on the 26th. A substantially accurate summary had appeared in the Russian newspaper the "Retch" on September 19.

The English text of the agreements, which was a translation only, is printed in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 100 (1911), p. 555, *sqq.* The full French text is printed *infra*, pp. 618-20, *Appendix I.*]

No. 318 (a).

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/325.

M. le Ministre,

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 18 (31) Août, 1907.

Me référant à l'arrangement au sujet du Thibet signé aujourd'hui, j'ai l'honneur de faire à Votre Excellence la Déclaration suivante :—

“Le Gouvernement Britannique juge utile, pour autant qu'il dépendra de lui, de ne pas admettre, sauf accord préalable avec le Gouvernement Russe, pour une durée de trois ans à partir de la date de la présente communication, l'entrée au Thibet d'une mission scientifique quelconque, à condition toutefois qu'une assurance pareille soit donnée de la part du Gouvernement Impérial de Russie.

“Le Gouvernement Britannique se propose, en outre, de s'adresser au Gouvernement Chinois afin de faire agréer à ce dernier une obligation analogue pour une période correspondante; il va de soi que la même démarche sera faite par le Gouvernement Russe.

“A l'expiration du terme de trois ans précité, le Gouvernement Britannique avisera d'un commun accord avec le Gouvernement Russe à l'opportunité, s'il y a lieu, de mesures ultérieures à prendre concernant les expéditions scientifiques au Thibet.”

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) A. NICOLSON.

(¹) [A certified copy of Sir A. Nicolson's note was enclosed in his despatch No. 445 of August 31, 1907, *infra*, p. 502, No. 456. The original text of M. Isvolski's reply (*v. below*) is bound up with the British original treaty.]

No. 318 (b).

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 18 (31) Août, 1907.

En réponse à la note de Votre Excellence en date de ce jour, j'ai l'honneur de déclarer à mon tour que le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie juge utile, pour autant qu'il dépendra de lui, de ne pas admettre,—sauf accord préalable avec le

Gouvernement Britannique,—pour une durée de trois ans à partir de la date de la présente communication, l'entrée au Thibet d'une mission scientifique quelconque.

De même que le Gouvernement Britannique, le Gouvernement Impérial se propose de s'adresser au Gouvernement Chinois afin de faire agréer à ce dernier une obligation analogue pour une période correspondante.

Il reste entendu qu'à l'expiration du terme de trois ans les deux Gouvernements aviseront d'un commun accord à l'opportunité, s'il y a lieu, de mesures ultérieures à prendre concernant les expéditions scientifiques au Thibet.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

ISWOLSKY.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PERSIA.

[*ED. NOTE.*—For the subject of this chapter v. Sir Percy Sykes: *A History of Persia*, 2nd ed. (1921), Vol. II, chs. LXXX–LXXXIII; Sir Arthur Hardinge: *A Diplomatist in the East* (1928), ch. IX; E. G. Browne: *The Persian Revolution, 1905–9* (1910); Lord Ronaldshay: *The Life of Lord Curzon* (1928), Vol. II, ch. VI, pp. 99–101, and ch. XXIII; Sir Arnold Wilson: *The Persian Gulf* (1928), ch. XVI. A short summary of developments after 1905 may here be given to make intelligible some of the allusions below. Throughout 1905 there were disturbances which ultimately took the form of a demand for representative institutions and a constitution. These became too strong to be resisted, and on August 5, 1906, the Shah, Muzaffur-ud-Din, issued a rescript promising to form a national assembly (Mejliss) representing the whole people. Elections then took place and the Shah formally opened the first session in person on October 7, 1906. Disputes began but the Shah signed the Constitution on January 1, 1907, dying on the 8th. He was succeeded by his eldest son Mohammed Ali Mirza, who pledged himself to the Constitution in a message to his people of February 11, 1907. Though this by no means allayed the public discontent, the Anglo-Russian Entente was concluded before Mohammed Ali's rule was seriously shaken. He was, however, hostile to the Mejliss, and conflict was frequent. He was ultimately compelled to seek refuge in the Russian Legation at Tehran (July 15, 1909), and thence exiled to the Crimea. His second son, Sultan Ahmed Mirza, aged 12, already recognised as the Valiahd, succeeded him with Asad-ul-Mulk as Regent.]

I.—THE “CURZON DESPATCH” AND THE REPLY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, 1899–1900.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On September 21, 1899, nine months after the arrival of Lord Curzon in India, the Government of India sent a long despatch to the Secretary of State for India in Council upon British policy in Persia and the Persian Gulf. On July 6, 1900, the Secretary of State, Lord George Hamilton, sent a reply.

As the result of debates in the House of Lords on February 6 and 10, 1908 (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 183, pp. 999–1047, 1306–1353), and in the House of Commons on February 17 (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 184, pp. 460–563, especially pp. 543–50), a substantial extract from the despatch of the Government of India was published as a command paper (*A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, (Cd. 3882), pp. 457–67. *cp. Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 184, pp. 1711–5). Though described on publication as an extract, many of the most important sections of the original document were in fact reproduced.

The Editors have thought it needless to reprint paragraphs 1–27, as these are given with substantial accuracy in the Parliamentary Paper, a few sentences only being slightly summarised. The Editors have omitted paragraphs 28–39, which deal with the Russian advance in Khorassan, Seistan, etc., in considerable detail. Paragraphs 40–46 describe French, German, Turkish and other interests in the Persian Gulf. Paragraphs 42–46 are printed in full.

From the standpoint of Anglo-Russian relations the vital part of the despatch is contained in paragraphs 47–62, which are now printed in full, although already published in the Parliamentary Paper with some omissions. The remaining part of the despatch is technical and relates mainly to details of consular establishment, etc., which have been accordingly omitted.]

No. 319.

The Government of India to the Secretary of State for India in Council.

F.O. Persia 615.

My Lord,

Simla, September 21, 1899.

. . . . 42. It should be noted that in the recent papers, with copies of which we have been favoured by Her Majesty's Government, we have found a repudiation of French ambitions in the quarter under discussion, no less explicit than that which we have already quoted from the lips of Count Mouravieff. On July 19th, 1899, M. Cambon said to Lord Salisbury that “France had no political aspiration whatever in the Persian Gulf; that she did not desire any kind of fortification or settlement or political privileges, or anything beyond the maintenance of those rights already insured to her by treaty.” We have been gratified to read this assurance, by which we hope that succeeding French ministries may hold themselves bound. But we regret that it has

not been communicated, not merely to Her Majesty's Government, but also to the French Agents in those regions, who do not appear to be equally acquainted with the views of the Government that they serve.

43. In recent years Germany has begun to display a positive and an increasing interest in Persia and also in the Persian Gulf. This interest has been the historical, and perhaps the natural, sequel of a commercial policy that has for some time aimed at securing the control of the principal railways in the Turkish dominions in Asia Minor, and of a political ambition, that more recently still, would appear to aim at the protection of the Ottoman Empire, alike in Europe and Asia. The obvious corollary to a system of German railways in Asia Minor, would be similar railroads to the Persian border and through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf. Already, as Sir M. Durand has informed the Foreign Office, the Germans have procured a concession for the construction of a road from Khanikin, on the Turko-Persian frontier, to Tehran, and have apparently only abstained from pressing for a railroad in the same quarter, because of the violent opposition with which the Russian Minister met the proposal at Tehran. The second son of the Shah, Prince Malik Mansur, has been spending several months in 1898-99 in Germany, where his education and proclivities are reported as having acquired a marked philo-Teutonic tinge. German military instructors have been proffered for the reorganisation of the Persian army. Prolongations of the Turko-German railways to Baghdad and to the Persian Gulf have been and are still being freely discussed; and the German Government are endeavouring to procure an interest in the overland Turkish Telegraph to Fao. In the Gulf itself a German Consulate was established in 1897 at Bushire, to safeguard the interests of six German subjects in the entire ports of that sea. A Bremen firm opened business at Bushire, but the specially chartered steamers which were sent out from Germany appear to have been a failure. At Basrah a more resolute attempt is being made to capture the local market. Quite recently a number of Germans have for some time been engaged in a study of the situation at Bunder Abbas. During the spring of the present year, a German man-of-war, the "Arcona," visited Maskat, Lingah, and Bushire; and reports have reached us of the likely appearance, at no distant date, of a German line of merchant steamers in the Gulf.

44. While we regard these symptoms of increasing German interest in the Persian Gulf as emphasising the international aspect which the Persian question appears more and more destined to assume, and therefore as adding to the complexities of an already sufficiently difficult situation, we do not question the *bonâ fide* commercial enterprise which is carrying German trade there, as to so many other open seas and ports in the world, and we can conceive that we may even find, in the existence of German political interests, an occasional ally or safeguard for our own. German interests, however, have a tendency to grow with some rapidity, and by steps which are not always acceptable to their neighbours: and we think that the need for an early decision upon the future policy to be adopted by Her Majesty's Government is not diminished, but is enhanced, by the appearance of so active a competitor upon the scene.

45. Apart from the recurrent symptoms of activity on the southern and western shores of the Persian Gulf, with which Her Majesty's Government are familiar, the Turkish Government have also in recent years displayed an increasing interest in its political fortunes. A determined attempt has been made to fortify the shadowy pretensions of the Ottoman Ports to suzerainty over Koweit. A Turkish title has been conferred upon the Sheikh; and forces have more than once been assembled at Basrah for a contemplated expedition against that place. Intrigues are constantly in progress at Bahrein. During 1898 and 1899 a Turkish corvette has been a frequent visitor at Lingah, where, the Sheikh being of Arab descent, Turkish interests are supposed to exist. Finally, the decisions of the Venice Conference and the proceedings of the Sanitary Board at Constantinople have enabled Turkey to claim an interest in the navigation of those waters, of which she has not been slow to take advantage.

46. The only other recent evidences of foreign intervention in the Persian Gulf,

of which we are cognisant, are a concession for the pearl-fisheries in that sea, which was given in 1898 by the Persian Government to a Spaniard and a Belgian, under Russian auspices; and the contemplated appearance at the Gulf ports of customs officers of Belgian nationality, similar to those who have already been placed in charge of the customs houses at Kermanshah and Tabriz, and whose influence, said to be omnipotent at the present moment with the Sadr Azam, is known to be entirely enlisted on the side of France and Russia.

47. We have gathered together these symptoms of external, and notably of Russian or of Russophil, interest in Southern Persia and in the Persian Gulf, not because we desire to invest them individually with an importance to which they are not entitled, but because collectively they indicate, in a manner that is not open to misinterpretation, the policy and ambitions of foreign Powers, and because we desire to impress upon Her Majesty's Government the fact that in an area, by land and by sea, which Great Britain regards with good reason as falling within her sphere of influence, that influence is being directly and increasingly challenged by other nations, who, in proportion as their foothold becomes more securely established, will resist any preferential claims, upon whatever foundation in history or in fact they may rest, and will claim for themselves an equality of right which in theory it may be difficult to contest.

48. More particularly do these considerations apply to the case of Russia, whose advance across the deserts that form a natural barrier of division between Northern and Southern Persia, cannot be regarded with anything but uneasiness by the Government of India, and the appearance of whose flag in the Persian Gulf would import a novel element of unrest into a situation that is at no time without its anxious features. We desire deliberately to say to Your Lordship, with a full consciousness of our responsibility in so saying that difficult as we find it in existing circumstances to meet the financial and military strain imposed upon us by the ever increasing proximity of Russian power upon the northern and north-western frontiers of India from the Pamirs to Herat, we could not contemplate without dismay the prospect of Russian neighbourhood in Eastern or Southern Persia, the inevitable consequence of which must be a great increase of our own burdens; while the maritime defensibility of India would require to be altogether reconsidered, were the dangers of a land invasion to be supplemented by the appearance of a possible antagonist as a naval power in waters contiguous to Indian shores.

49. We cannot pretend to divine the future, or to say whether any European Power, and if so which, will at any time push her advance to the point of claiming a maritime outlet in or near to the Persian Gulf. The fate of Mesopotamia lies beyond our ken: and it may be that in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, some stronger Power may one day exercise dominion at Baghdad, may occupy Basrah, and may demand access for its vessels to the neighbouring waters of the Gulf. Such a consummation, it is in our opinion, in the interests of British policy, as long as may be possible, to postpone. But upon the question of allowing any European Power, and more especially Russia, to overrun Central and Southern Persia, and so to reach the Gulf, or to acquire naval facilities in the latter even without such territorial connections, we do not conceive that any doubt whatever can be entertained: and we imagine that it will be accepted as a cardinal axiom of British policy that no such development would be acquiesced in by Her Majesty's Government. We would arrive with the greater confidence at this conclusion, since we were lately informed by Your Lordship that on April 15th of the present year, Lord Salisbury communicated to the Persian Government with reference to rumours of the cession of a port in the Gulf to Russia, that "Her Majesty's Government felt it to be their duty to renew the intimation that it would not be compatible with the interests of the British Empire that any European Power should exercise control or jurisdiction over the ports of the Persian Gulf."

50. Such being the existing situation in Southern Persia, and the principles of policy accepted by Her Majesty's Government being as already stated, we pass to a consideration of the manner in which these principles should be translated into action,

and of the steps which should, in our opinion, be taken at the present juncture for the protection of the common interests of Great Britain and the Indian Empire.

51. We are aware that, more than half a century ago, there were exchanged, and have more than once since been repeated, certain explicit assurances concerning the integrity and independence of Persia between the governments of Great Britain and Russia. The first of these assurances were entered into by Lord Palmerston and Count Nesselrode. The former in a despatch, dated September 5th, 1834, placed on record that "the governments of Great Britain and Russia are acting, with regard to the affairs of Persia in the same spirit, and are equally animated by a sincere desire to maintain, not only the internal tranquillity, but also the independence and integrity of Persia." Count Nesselrode, in despatches, dated October 20th, 1838, and January 29th, 1839, reiterated these pledges on behalf of his government. Again in 1873 the continued existence of these mutual assurances was referred to with satisfaction by Count de Brunnow, as reported in a despatch by Lord Granville, dated July 10th, 1873. Finally, on March 12th, 1888, M. de Giers intimated, through M. de Staal, to Lord Salisbury that the Russian Government "have no objection to placing again on record that their views on this point are in no way altered"; and a communication to the effect that the engagements between Great Britain and Russia to respect and promote the integrity and independence of the Persian kingdom had again been renewed and confirmed, was accordingly made by Sir H. D. Wolff to the Shah.

52. Whilst it may be presumed that these pledges, so frequently renewed, are still in existence, and while we have no desire to infer that they are within measurable distance of being broken, we are yet of opinion that they are in themselves quite insufficient to arrest the centripetal progress of Russian influence in Persia, or to save either the Persian kingdom, or British interests in it, from the erosive agencies that we have described. Within the limits of a nominally still existing integrity and independence so many encroachments upon both those attributes are possible, that by almost imperceptible degrees they pass into the realm of constitutional fiction, where they may continue to provide an exercise for the speculations of the jurist, long after they have been contemptuously ignored by statesmen.

53. If this proposition is accepted, and if we cannot rely upon written pledges to safeguard the future of Persia, it behoves us to examine the various alternative policies that have been or can be proposed. The first of these is the policy of a regeneration of Persia by Anglo-Russian means; *i.e.*, joint action by Great Britain and Russia to insist upon reforms, to reorganise the administration and finances, to develop the resources of the country, to lend the requisite means, in fact to convert the Persian Government by combined philanthropy from a moribund into a solvent institution. This policy was discussed and rejected by Sir M. Durand in his Memorandum of September 1895, on the ground that Russia would denounce us to the Shah to begin with, and would play us false afterwards; and in his despatch of February 1899, he again "proceeds upon the assumption that we cannot hope to come to terms with Russia, and persuade her to join us in a policy of reform and development." We concur with Her Majesty's Minister in believing that the reform of Persia by a policy of friendly co-operation between Russia and ourselves is out of the question; and we do so in the main for the reason, which no one familiar with Persia will deny, that Russia is interested not in the reform of Persia, but in its decay; that in the background of her ambitions is the vision of a country and a people falling from inherent debility into her grasp; and that any policy which might tend to strengthen the country or to revivify the people, is to be resisted as tending to thwart the fulfilment of those ambitions. We might give many illustrations in support of this proposition; but we will content ourselves with one. Sir M. Durand has lately supplied to the Foreign Office the version given by the Sadr Azam of the agreement between the Persian and Russian Governments, by which the former bound itself in 1889 not to grant any railway concessions to any other Power than Russia, except with the consent of the latter, for a period of 10 years. Whatever be the real facts of the case, there can be no doubt that this engagement, as long as it has lasted, and so long as it continues to last, is an effective barrier to any genuine

development of the country. It was due to expire in the present year. Our latest information from Sir M. Durand is that it has, under pressure from the Russian Government, been renewed for another term of five years.

54. The alternative policy recommended by Sir M. Durand is that we should plainly intimate that any Russian encroachments in Northern Persia will provoke corresponding measures for the protection of British interests in the south. In his Memorandum of September 1895, Her Majesty's Minister suggested that this declaration should be made to the Russian Government. In his despatch of February 1899 he proposed that it should also be made to the Persian Government; so that both parties should be well aware of the steps that would follow upon any further Russian aggression. It has been objected to this policy that such an engagement might impose upon the British Government an unwelcome obligation to intervene and to add to British responsibilities in Southern Persia, at the moment most opportune to Russia, and least opportune to ourselves. There is force in this objection; although we think that it might be met by introducing sufficient elasticity into the proposed intimation to leave Her Majesty's Government free to act for the protection of British interests in Southern Persia, not in a specified manner at a specified moment, but in what manner and at what juncture might commend itself to their judgment. Moreover the value of the objection is somewhat weakened by the consideration that did Russia take any such step in Northern Persia as is here contemplated, counter-action of some sort, with or without a previous intimation, would in all probability be imposed upon Her Majesty's Government; while the knowledge that a Russian advance in the north might be the signal for a corresponding British move in the south would, it can scarcely be doubted, operate as a deterrent upon any premature activity on the part of Russia, since she might thereby gravely jeopardise the realisation of her own dreams of ultimate access to Southern Persia and the Persian Gulf.

55. Nevertheless before we recommend that such a policy should be essayed, we desire to raise the question whether, though it be impossible to conclude an agreement with Russia for the joint patronage and development of Persia, it might not yet be possible to come to an understanding with her for the separate patronage and development of that country in distinct and clearly defined compartments by the two great Powers, in other words for a recognition of British and Russian spheres of interest in the dominions of the Shah. This is a solution the desirability of which has not been lost sight of by Sir M. Durand, but which for certain reasons he did not feel called upon to discuss. Recent events in China have familiarised the public mind with the idea of such spheres of interest, although their existence would appear to be still somewhat lacking both in clearness of definition and in precision of outline. The Viceroy has observed in recent telegrams from Lord Salisbury to Sir M. Durand with reference to a Persian loan and to mining concessions in that country, indications of a willingness to concede to Russia liberties in the north of Persia, parallel in scope and substance with those conceded to Great Britain in the south; and it is worthy of consideration whether in an expansion of this suggestion might not be found a feasible scheme.

56. We have already alluded to the line across Persia drawn by Sir M. Durand from Khanikin on the Turkish frontier, through Kermanshah, Hamadan, Ispahan, Yezd and Kerman to Seistan, as indicating the northern limits of the sphere within which British political influence and trade are paramount. To some extent this partition is assisted by geographical conditions, the great deserts of Central Persia constituting a natural barrier between the north and the south, and roughly dividing the one from the other. But this situation is modified both in the west of Persia, where there are no deserts, and where there is no physical line of demarcation between the respective spheres of influence; in the centre of Persia, where Ispahan can hardly be said to constitute the natural frontier of any geographical zone; and also in the extreme east where Seistan, the inclusion of which in the British sphere would be an obligatory point, lies not to the south but to the north of the great desert. These considerations might not affect the success of any engagement that was carried out with equal *bona fides* by both parties; but they might become a fruitful source of friction were such a

good understanding not to be counted upon in the future. In any case, we would recommend that the line of partition, suggested by Sir M. Durand, should be so far amended as to substitute Kashan for Ispahan. It would be undesirable that any Russian railway should penetrate further south than Kashan, which indeed is separated by a considerable range of hills from Ispahan, or that Russia should have right of access to the very fringe of the latter district.

57. We have observed that in China the Agreement recently concluded between Her Majesty's Government and Russia as to spheres of interest has related to railways only. Either party has pledged itself not to seek on its own account or on behalf of others for railway concessions in the rival sphere, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for such concessions, supported by the other in that sphere. *Primâ facie* there does not appear to be any reason why such an agreement should not equally be extended to mines, roads, and other industrial or economic undertakings. The value of such an understanding is considerable; because although political influence is not expressly mentioned, yet in eastern countries commercial and industrial enterprises are the familiar agencies through which political influence is exercised by alien powers, and because that influence is apt to follow in the wake of railways and trade. We do not think, if such an agreement were arrived at with Russia, with reference to the Persian territories lying north and south of the predicated line, that there would be an end to Russian designs in Southern Persia or in the Persian Gulf. Such a result might, perhaps, ensue from an engagement that no political influence should be exercised by either party on the opposite side of the line. But there would be manifest difficulties in arriving at any such understanding; since it would be out of the question to remove the British representatives, either at Tehran, at Tabriz or at Meshed, whose functions necessarily involve the exercise of some sort of political influence, while a corresponding objection would no doubt be felt by the Russian Government. But even an engagement limited to railway and commercial exploitation would have this effect, that it would deprive Russia of the means by which political or territorial ambitions in the rival sphere could most easily be carried out, and would render it difficult for her to push them to success, as long as Great Britain remained on the alert.

58. There are, however, difficulties and drawbacks in the case of such an understanding which it would be impolitic to ignore. We have already hinted at one of their number. The facts with reference to Seistan which have been mentioned by the Viceroy in his Minute, by Sir M. Durand, and also in this despatch, indicate the absolute necessity of including that district within the British sphere. Nevertheless Seistan is physically and administratively a part of the province of Khorasan, from which it is severed by no clear line of division, the Governorship of Seistan being vested in a member of the old ruling family of Kain, the two existing heads of which are brothers, residing respectively at Tabbas and Birjand. It also seems exceedingly doubtful to us whether Russia would, by any such agreement as we are discussing, forgo her designs upon Seistan itself, and still more her chances of reaching the eastern extremity of the Persian Gulf. Nor again is it clear that she would be willing to cancel the engagement with regard to railway construction, which she has recently renewed with the Persian Government, and to hand over the southern half of Persia to possible railway exploitation by British agency, in return for a monopoly of similar exploitation (which may be said to be already at her disposal) in the northern half. These, however, are considerations which could only be decided by the attitude of Russia herself, were she approached on the subject by Her Majesty's Government. We indicate them merely for the purpose of showing that we are far from confident that the suggestion, if put forward, will meet with a favourable reception.

59. A more serious drawback, from the point of view of British interests, is the fact that the capital of Persia would lie in the northern or Russian sphere, and that Russian influence there, already predominant, could hardly fail to become supreme. The situation that has recently arisen in China would present itself with tenfold gravity and emphasis. A desire would not merely be intimated to connect the capital with the Russian railway system: but a line itself would, we may imagine, at once be made to

Tehran, while corresponding lines would in all probability be constructed from the Russian frontier in Georgia to Tabriz, and in Trans-Caspia to Meshed. With the three great cities of Northern Persia thus permanently linked with the Russian system, the power of pressure exercised by the Russian Government, which is already considerable, would be positively overwhelming. The results would, in all probability, be felt beyond the limits of Persia. They would aggravate the already formidable offensive strength of Russia against Northern Afghanistan, and would increase the weight and influence of her position throughout Central Asia. In Persia itself, the Shah would tend more and more to become a Russian puppet, and Northern Persia a Russian proconsulate. We should look with great anxiety, in such a case, upon the fate of such institutions as the Imperial Bank of Persia, and the Indo-European Telegraph Department, whose headquarters are in Tehran. We should fear a marked diminution of influence on the part of Her Majesty's representative at the capital; and we do not conceal our anticipations that in the long run such a partition might involve the permanent break-up of the Persian kingdom, and, if it did not ultimately lead to rival Russian and British Protectorates in the north and south, might at any rate result in the selection of another capital, and in the rule of more than one native prince in Persia.

60. Neither will it be overlooked by Her Majesty's Government that, while any such arrangement with Russia might preclude that Power from obtaining control over Central and Southern Persia and in that way reaching the Persian Gulf, it would not for one moment retard, but might on the contrary accelerate her advance to the same objective through Mesopotamia by way of Baghdad. This is an issue which we should regard with scarcely inferior repugnance; but the problem is one which we do not feel called upon to discuss upon the present occasion, and which would require to be examined on independent grounds. Nor again would an Anglo-Russian agreement preclude France, or Germany, or any other Power from endeavouring to acquire in Southern Persia or in the Gulf the position from which Russia would *ex hypothesi* have debarred herself. There might even be combined action between them for that object. These however are features inseparable from the solution which we are discussing, and which would be of a less formidable character, if the influence of the principal competitor were removed from the scene. We should strongly deprecate the political rivalry of any European nation in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf; even though such a situation, while fraught with constant annoyance, might not, as in the case of Russia, constitute a positive menace to the Indian Empire.

61. There remains the further danger, distinctly contemplated by Sir M. Durand in discussing the question of a possible understanding with Russia, that she would not abide by the terms of any such understanding. Sufficient grounds for this induction may unquestionably be found in the history of Russian advance in Central Asia during the past half century. But an appreciation of the inclinations and idiosyncrasies of both parties to an agreement, in the light, where possible, of past experience, is an element in the drawing up of a fresh bargain which is not likely to be lost sight of by either agent, whether it be regarded as involving a discount from, or an appreciation of, the value of the new contract. Moreover such contracts, if not of perpetual duration, or even if ultimately infringed by one of the two parties, have been shown in many cases to be of immense value, in the respite that they afford from the strain of an otherwise ceaseless rivalry, and in the opportunity presented for a peaceful consolidation of existing interests.

62. We have now placed before Your Lordship the *pros* and *cons*, as they present themselves to our eyes, of the alternative policies in Persia. While not sanguine as to the prospects of success, we are ourselves of opinion that the experiment of an understanding with Russia as to future spheres of interest in that country is worthy of being made, in the interests both of Persia itself, and still more of harmony between the two great Powers, upon whose relations the peace of Asia may be said to depend. Should Her Majesty's Government decide upon making any overtures to the Russian Government in the direction indicated, and should they either be rejected, or result in

failure, it will still be possible to adopt the alternative recommended by Sir M. Durand. Indeed, if the terms of a reasonable arrangement are proffered by one party, and are refused by the other, the natural corollary would appear to be that the originator of the proposal should reserve to himself the right to protect by whatever means may be at his disposal the interests which he has endeavoured to conserve by friendly co-operation; and should meet what would in such a case be conscious aggression on the one side by retaliation on the other.

63. In any case, however, though still more in the case of a failure to arrive at an understanding with Russia, we conceive that it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government and upon the Government of India to come to an early decision upon the subsidiary question, raised by Sir M. Durand, namely as to the steps that require forthwith to be taken in order to safeguard British and Indian interests in the so-called British sphere in Persia from the competition with which we have shown them to be threatened. . . .⁽¹⁾

89. We have now completed our survey of the proposals that have been submitted to us for examination, and of the situation in Persia as it presents itself to our eyes. In commending our views to the earnest consideration of Your Lordship and of Her Majesty's Government, we trust that we may have succeeded in impressing upon both, the gravity of the situation with which Great Britain and India are jointly faced, and the necessity, while there is yet time, of meeting it with definite and united counsels. We conclude by reiterating the confident hope, already expressed in our despatch of August 10th, 1898, that in the last resort, and in any sudden emergency, we may rely upon Her Majesty's Government for the protection of interests which are vital both to India and to the British Empire.

We have, etc.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON.

E. H. H. COLLEN.

C. M. RIVAZ.

C. E. DAWKINS.

T. RALEIGH.

R. GARDINER.

⁽¹⁾ [Here follow details as to charges of British establishments in Persia, etc.]

No. 320.

Lord G. Hamilton to Government of India.

F.O. Persia 623.

(No. 14.) Secret.

My Lord,

India Office, London, July 6, 1900.

. . . . 5. I pass on to the careful and exhaustive review contained in your letter of the 21st of September, relative to the present situation in Persia, and the course of British relations with it. The most vital interests of the Government of India in that country concern the defence of the Indian Empire against any attack proceeding from the borders of Beluchistan or Southern Persia, and from the ports in the Persian Gulf. But any measures which may be suggested for meeting or averting that risk must take into account the resistance which they are likely to encounter from foreign Powers, whose own interests in Persia and in the Gulf have been greatly extended in recent years. It is in this respect that the situation has undergone a material change of late.

6. As regards Russia, her advance on the borders of Persia and her assimilation of the territory absorbed by her in Central Asia, have ensured to her a safe stepping stone for a fresh move. Our base of operations remains on the sea while

Russia has moved, and as she has advanced her influence has increased. If we lay down the principle of the independence of Persia, we are met by the fact that Russia has already gained on land a position which dominates and threatens almost the whole of Persia, and enables her, under cover of concessions and monopolies, to exercise a practical and exclusive control over a considerable proportion of the administration of the country. The very independence which we struggle to maintain may become the most effective instrument which Russia can use against us. Already our influence in Northern Persia has yielded to the pressure of Russia, which could annex that part of Persia without our being able to offer any effective resistance.

7. Your Excellency is also aware of the course of events in the Gulf, which have already modified that theory of "unchallenged supremacy both naval and commercial" to which you refer in paragraph 12 of your letter under reply. France has resolutely asserted her right to a joint protectorate over Muscat with all the consequences that may flow from the guarantee of 1862. Germany is interested in the development of railway enterprise, and her agents have lately proceeded to Koweit. Russian ships have visited Bunder Abbas and adjoining islands, as well as other ports in the Gulf. In these and various other ways the unquestioned position, which was formerly asserted and exercised by us, has, even in the Gulf itself, been encroached upon. Though we still possess a practical monopoly of trade in the Gulf, signs are not wanting that this advantage will be gradually challenged, partly by the extension of railways to the sea and partly by the greater activity of foreign trade. It can hardly be maintained that, in view of such a competition, civilized Powers can be permanently denied the benefit of access to the ports of Persia because their admission will infringe upon a monopoly which we have hitherto enjoyed.

8. But these changes, which are the inevitable consequence of improved facilities both of internal communication and sea transport, render it the more necessary that we should closely watch over the objects and aims of our past policy in Persia, so that under the changing circumstances of the future we may effectively safeguard those interests and spheres of influence in Persia which are essential to India. Your Excellency discusses the possibility of coming to an agreement with Russia, as to the spheres of influence to be exercised respectively in Persia by the two countries. There is much to be said in favour of such an understanding, if it could be established and maintained. But the probability is, that if any such overtures were made by Her Majesty's Government to the Russian Foreign Office, the Shah would be informed of the proposal in such a manner as possibly to convey to his mind the idea that the partition of his territories between Great Britain and Russia was the immediate object of the present policy of Great Britain. For these and other reasons I see no advantage at present in making any such proposals to the Russian Government, or in making any fresh announcement to the Shah's Government on the subject of our settled and declared policy in Southern Persia. We have, at the present moment, great trading interests in the Persian Gulf, we have a frontier continuous with Eastern Persia, and the limits of the protected State of Khelat extend to the sea-board. We are under treaty engagements with the trucial chiefs in the Gulf, and they look to us to protect their rights. If ever Persia or the Sultan of Muscat would prove unable to maintain order or repress disturbance on their seaboard, we have, from the overwhelming character of our commercial interests, the prior claim to step in and maintain order in the Persian Gulf. The only question is how far recent events and concessions require that fresh action should be taken to reserve this claim and maintain our rights, in view of the gradual intrusion of other foreign interests into fresh spheres of influence and territory.

9. Her Majesty's Government has, as your Lordship is aware, taken two steps of late which may lead to important results, and which have impressed upon the Persian Government a sense of the grave issues involved in losing sight of the legitimate interests of Great Britain and India in the ports of the Gulf and in Southern Persia. On the 15th of April 1899 Lord Salisbury informed the Persian

Government that "Her Majesty's Government felt it to be their duty to renew the intimation that it would not be compatible with the interests of the British Empire that any European Power should exercise control or jurisdiction over the ports of the Persian Gulf." On the 20th of March last Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran was instructed to remind the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs "of the written promise given by the Persian Government on the 23rd of October 1897, that the Customs of Southern Persia shall never be placed under foreign supervision and control," and "Her Majesty's Government must hold the Persian Government to the strict observance of this engagement, of which they were reminded in December last."

10. In regard to concessions for railways, the conveyance to the Persian Government of an equally precise intimation was authorised in the telegram from the Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Spring Rice on the 4th of April last, when a reference was made to "the promise of the late Shah that Great Britain shall have priority in the construction of a Southern Railway to Tehran, that if concessions for railways are given to others in the North a similar concession shall be granted to an English Company in the South, and that no Southern Railway concession shall be granted to any foreign company without consultation with Her Majesty's Government." The Persian Government was accordingly reminded of this engagement.

11. In the Gulf itself an examination of the ports, harbours and islands is being conducted, and further reports on the subject from the Captains of Her Majesty's ships are awaited.

12. Your Excellency may be assured that all vigilance will be exercised in closely watching the course of affairs in Persia, and that whilst Her Majesty's Government do not propose to adopt for the moment any departure from their past line of action, they readily admit that the conditions there may so alter as to necessitate some change in the procedure and measures required for protecting Indian interests in Persia. In the meanwhile your Excellency in Council is considering the subject of military preparations and the scheme of defence discussed in my Secret Despatch No. 5, dated the 23rd of February last, and I have under my consideration your letter No. 51 (Secret, Military Department) dated the 29th of March 1900.

I have, &c.

GEORGE HAMILTON.

II.—SURVEY OF BRITISH POLICY, 1905.

No. 321.

Memorandum on British Policy in Persia.

(8526.)

Confidential.

Foreign Office, October 31, 1905.

In a Memorandum dated December 1895, and in a despatch of the 12th February, 1899, Sir H. M. Durand, then His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, submitted his views upon the existing state of affairs in Persia, and made certain suggestions regarding the best steps to be taken in order to improve our position and to counteract the growth of Russian influence. Various of his recommendations, such as those concerning the establishment of British Consular posts at Kerman, Bunder Abbas, and Kermanshah, in Seistan and on the Karun, and the improvement in the position of our Consuls at Ispahan and Tabreez, have since been carried into effect.

In a despatch of the 21st September, 1899,⁽¹⁾ the Government of India discuss and amplify Sir H. M. Durand's proposals. They describe British—i.e., Anglo-

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 356–63, No. 319.]

Indian—interests in Persia to be commercial, political, strategical, and telegraphic.

1. As regards commercial interests, they quote Sir H. M. Durand's estimate of the total annual British trade with Persia as standing approximately at £3,500,000. They believe this estimate to be under the mark, and anticipate that it will increase; and they call attention to the fact that a considerable amount of British capital is sunk in undertakings in various parts of the country.

It would seem that these anticipations have not been realized, and that British trade, partly, no doubt, owing to the unfavourable tariff which the Russian Government have induced Persia to adopt, partly to the general condition of impoverishment and insecurity prevailing in the country, has not increased up to the present time.

From a Memorandum which has been drawn up in the Commercial Department of this Office, it would seem that in 1903, out of a total trade import and export of £11,000,000, British commerce amounted to about £2,700,000, of which two-thirds belonged to the United Kingdom and one-third to India.

British shipping, however, continues to form 90 per cent. of the total in the Gulf ports.

From this Memorandum it would appear that, with the exception of the overland route from India to Seistan, the United Kingdom is more interested than India in Persian commerce. The figures given for the Gulf ports are:—

	£
India	720,000
United Kingdom	940,000
Other routes—	
India	186,000
United Kingdom	886,000

2. As regards political interests, the Government of India admit that these a century ago were, in the main, Indian in inception, and are still largely Indian in character, but they point out that ever since the first visit of the late Nasr-ed-Din Shah to Europe, Persia has been brought increasingly into the sphere of European politics; that France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Holland, and Belgium all maintain diplomatic missions at Tehran; that the future of Persia is part of the general Eastern Question, and that it has generally been acknowledged that the control of British diplomacy at Tehran must of necessity be vested in the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

3. As regards the strategical interests of Great Britain, the Government of India admit that these arise from conditions with which India is most concerned, but they urge that the question is one of such magnitude as to affect not merely the destinies of the British dominion in India, but those of the British Empire, and that from this point of view Persia in its strategical, no less than in its political, aspect is not only an Indian, but an Imperial concern.

4. The telegraphic interests of Great Britain may, in the opinion of the Government of India, be said to be evenly divided between the mother country and India. They observe that the system established is equally indispensable to both countries, and that 30 per cent. of the total traffic consists in messages between Great Britain and places lying beyond India, notably to the Australasian Colonies. The cost, however, in so far as it is borne by either Government, devolves exclusively upon the Indian and not upon the Imperial Exchequer.

The tendency of British policy in Persia has been to avoid, as far as we can, any addition to our political or territorial responsibilities, or any step calculated to disturb the political *status quo*. Our efforts have been directed towards maintaining the continued national existence and territorial integrity of Persia and developing her resources. We have sought to infuse some vitality into the Persian Administration, strengthen the Central Government against Russian domination, and encourage the development of British commerce and enterprise in South

and Central Persia, both for that purpose and as a desirable object in itself. But we have always kept in view the secondary consideration that if the Persian Government fail to maintain themselves and fall into hopeless subjection to Russia, we ought to be able to assert ourselves in the south to an extent corresponding to the increase of Russian domination in the north. This consideration has led to the recent strengthening of our Consular position in the Persian Gulf and in South-Eastern Persia, at points of much political and strategical importance, where recent Russian activity has necessitated a corresponding countermove on our part.

The geographical and political reasons which must in any case give to Russia a preponderating influence at Tehran over that of Great Britain are very well summed up in the despatch from the Government of India of the 21st September, 1899, to which allusion has already been made. They consist, briefly, in the fact that Russian forces can with ease be concentrated on the Perso-Russian frontiers, that the Caspian Sea is practically a Russian lake, and that the capital of Persia is within easy striking distance of Russian territory.

Apart, however, from these circumstances, our conflict with Russia has been very unequal. The aim of Russian policy has been to reduce Persia slowly to a state of impotence under Russian domination, and to secure a monopoly of Persian commerce by means of bounties to their own exporters and of tariffs unfavourable to British commodities.

The natural tendency of the Persian Administration has been towards decay, and it has been far easier to encourage that process than to fortify Persian Sovereigns and Ministers against it.

The Russian Government have, moreover, supported the unceasing efforts of their diplomacy by a lavish expenditure.

The Cossack Brigade at Tehran, although manned by Persians, is commanded by officers whose services are lent by Russia. It constitutes the only dependable and disciplined body of troops in the country, and is the only force which receives its pay with regularity.

The Russian Bank at Tehran has the full support of the Russian Exchequer, its Manager takes his orders from the Ministry of Finance at St. Petersburg, and the nature of its business is dictated by political rather than financial considerations.

A Russian loan of over £2,000,000 was made to the Persian Government in 1900, nominally through the Bank, but guaranteed by the Russian Government, and has been supplemented by a further loan of £1,000,000 in 1902. Advances on account current are frequently obtained by the Persians from the Russian Bank, one of £80,000 as recently as last June, and the Valiahd stands indebted to the Bank for a similar amount.

Many thousands of pounds have been spent by Russia in the construction of roads in Northern Persia, notably those connecting the Caspian and Resht with Tehran, Kazvin with Tabreez and with Hamadan, Asterabad with Meshed, &c. Harbour works on a considerable scale have recently been commenced at Enzeli, the Persian port on the Caspian Sea. By means of improved communications, reduced transit fares, and export bounties, it is sought to monopolize the Persian market for Russian goods, which are now distributed over Northern Persia by a service of motor-cars.

Russia has spared no expense in order to secure her own preponderance, or when the opportunity has presented itself for the simple purpose of obstructing British commerce and influence. The establishment of a quarantine cordon at Turbat-i-Haidari may be cited as a case in point. The opening of the long closed Nushki-Seistan trading route in 1896 excited much concern in Russia, and in the following year the outbreak of plague in India afforded the Russian authorities an opportunity of endeavouring to strangle the new enterprise at its birth, and of increasing their own influence in Seistan. Under pretext of establishing a protective cordon to safeguard the Perso-Afghan frontier, Russian Cossacks, under Russian

officers, were posted at various points in Persian territory and turned back all caravans. In February 1897 several Russian doctors, with an escort of 150 Cossacks, arrived at Turbat-i-Haidari, 80 miles south of Meshed. The vexatious and arbitrary measures employed by this post against British and Afghan traders threatened to entirely destroy the traffic on the new road. As the representations of the Persian Government and His Majesty's Government failed to secure its withdrawal, we have been forced into taking measures for the protection of our traders. A British doctor, with a suitable escort, was dispatched to the spot to protect our interests, and, in September 1903, a permanent Consul was appointed at Turbat-i-Haidari.

Similarly, increased Russian activity in Seistan has necessitated a corresponding countermove, in the shape of a British Consular appointment. The lively interest shown by Russia in Southern and Eastern Persia, evidenced by the appointment of Consuls, doctors, and news-writers, and the frequent visits of so-called scientific expeditions, may be due in part to considerations of commercial expansion or strategic advantage, but must be mainly ascribed to the well-known Russian aspiration to possess a port on the Persian Gulf, or preferably at a point on the shores of South-Eastern Persia, such as Chahbar. The possession of such a port would be valueless unless it could be connected by railway with the north, and any railway must pass through Meshed and Seistan. The establishment of a Russian naval base in the Gulf would not only affect the safety of Indian ports and commerce, but would be a standing menace to our communications with India and our Colonies, and must entail a heavy increase in our military and naval responsibilities.

The appointment of a Russian Consul-General to Ispahan, with a large salary and Cossack escort, rendered it necessary to grant to our Consul an improvement in position and emoluments. It also became desirable to place our Consul at Tabreez, the residence of the future Shah, on a footing of some equality with his Russian colleague. The presence of a Russian Consul at Bushire, and the appointment of a Vice-Consul at Mohammerah, attended with persistent efforts to obtain a footing in the Persian Gulf by means of subsidized steamer services and intrigues with the tribes on the littoral,* have necessitated an increase of British Consular appointments in order to render our position in those regions unassailable.

It will thus be seen that, in proportion as the Russian plan of attack has developed, efforts on our part to resist it have become necessary, unless we were content to abandon the struggle altogether, and the increased expenditure on Consular establishments in Persia is, in the main, a result of those efforts.

Whatever exception may be taken to such expenditure, as not warranted by the volume of trade, it is certainly far inferior to that which Russia has considered to be justified for the objects she has in view. The conflict might become less acute if we could establish some working arrangement with her, but the Russian Government have hitherto always objected to anything in the nature of a division of spheres of influence or interest. They have consistently refused to co-operate with His Majesty's Government, even on such questions as the Turco-Persian frontier dispute at Mendali, when they were practically under a Conventional obligation to do so, or the attacks on Europeans at Urumia. Failing some such arrangement, and supposing the Russian tactics to continue, it is scarcely to be hoped that fresh expenditure will not be required in order to maintain in some degree an even front with our rival.

While a portion of the additional expense incurred in Persia during the past few years has been due to the adoption of recommendations made by His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, there is no doubt that most of the increase has been initiated by the Government of India, and this applies especially to the recent proposals which have not yet received the sanction of the Treasury. But it is submitted that such increased expenditure has been rendered necessary in pursuance of the general policy of the Imperial Government, and that it is practically impossible to define

* *E.g.*, a high Russian decoration was recently presented to the Sheikh of Mohammerah.

the exact proportion of responsibility, political and financial, which should be assumed by His Majesty's Government and by that of India for the various measures taken by them jointly or severally in the defence of Anglo-Indian interests in Persia. Those measures have been adopted with mutual concurrence for a joint object, and it is as important for the Imperial Government as for the Government of India that the principle of joint financial responsibility, necessitating previous concurrence in all such measures, should be maintained.

The aims and considerations which influence British policy are defined by Lord Lansdowne in a despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran of the 6th January, 1902.⁽²⁾ The material portions of it are as follows:—

No. 321 (a).

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir A. Hardinge.

F.O. Persia 649.

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 6, 1902.

[Your recent despatches giving your impressions on the political and financial situation in Persia, and reporting your interviews with the Grand Vizier, have received the careful attention of His Majesty's Government.

They have noted with satisfaction the friendly demeanour of the Grand Vizier, and indications of a desire on his part to return to the confidential relations which existed in former years between the Persian Government and the British Legation.

On the other hand, the refusal of the Persian Government to avail itself of the offer of assistance made by you to the Grand Vizier in the course of Nov[embe]r last, and the peculiar circumstances under which that refusal took place, render it desirable that you should frankly explain the considerations by which the conduct of Great Britain towards Persia has been influenced.]

The policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to the various Persian questions which most interest this country has from time to time been clearly indicated on the occasions when those questions have come under discussion. It may, however, be useful to recapitulate the salient features of that policy in a statement, which you may, at your discretion place before the Grand Vizier and other Ministers of the Shah, or even before His Majesty himself, if a suitable opportunity should present itself.

The Persian Government must be well aware, from the experience of 100 years, that Great Britain has no designs upon the sovereignty of the Shah or the independence of his State. It has, on the contrary, been one of our principal objects to encourage and strengthen the States lying outside the frontier of our Indian Empire, with the hope that we should find in them an intervening zone sufficient to prevent direct contact between the dominions of Great Britain and those of other great military Powers. We could not, however, maintain this policy if in any particular instance we should find that one of these intervening States was being crushed out of national existence, and falling practically under the complete domination of another Power. It would be necessary in that case, before the intervening State had virtually disappeared, to consider what alternative course our interests might demand now that the object to which our efforts had hitherto been directed was no longer attainable.

Applying these principles to Persia, we have long recognized the superior interest of Russia in the northern portion of the Shah's dominions, which must naturally result from the long extent of her conterminous frontier. Whatever steps we may have taken to maintain our position in Northern Persia have therefore been taken as much in the interests of Persia herself and of her national independence as in our own, which are not directly threatened by Russian superiority in those regions, except in so far as it might affect the Persian capital and seat of government.

In the south, on the other hand, for fully a century our efforts have been successfully devoted to building up a substantial and preëminent mercantile position, with the result that we have acquired an altogether exceptional interest in that part of Persia.

Persia herself has benefited immensely by these labours. We have cleared the waters adjoining her coasts of pirates, and have kept them constantly policed. It may be stated without exaggeration that the development of the whole southern trade of Persia is due to British enterprise, and that it is by this agency that Bushire and Bunder Abbas have been converted into flourishing ports.

The system of telegraphs which has been introduced by the British Indian Telegraph Administration, with the permission and assistance of the Persian Government, has tended not

⁽²⁾ [F.O. Persia 649. The text has been checked by the original draft and some corrections made, *v. infra*, p. 371, note ⁽³⁾. It is clear, from the annotations on the draft, that although dated January 6, the despatch was not sent off until January 9 at earliest.]

merely to industrial and commercial progress, but also in a remarkable degree to the consolidation of the Shah's authority over the centre and south of the country.

It cannot reasonably be supposed that Great Britain would abandon a position attained by so many years of constant effort, or would acquiesce in attempts on the part of other Powers to acquire political predominance in the south of Persia. Although, therefore, His Majesty's Government have no desire to obstruct in any way the efforts of Russia to find a commercial entrance for her trade in the Persian Gulf, or to oppose any obstacle to the passage of her commerce from the north for export from Persian ports, they could not admit that such commercial facilities should form the pretext for the occupation by Russia of points possessing strategical importance or for the establishment of such an ascendancy in the south as she already enjoys in the north.

The Persian Government should therefore distinctly understand and bear in mind that Great Britain could not consent to the acquisition by Russia of a military or naval station in the Persian Gulf, for the reason that such a station must be regarded as a challenge to Great Britain and a menace to her Indian Empire.

If the Persian Government were at any time to make such a concession to Russia, it would be necessary for His Majesty's Government to take in the Persian Gulf such measures as they might consider necessary for the protection of British interests: measures which, in view of their naval strength in those waters, would be attended with no serious difficulty.

Nor, again, could His Majesty's Government acquiesce in the concession to Russia of any preferential political rights or advantages, or any commercial monopoly or exclusive privilege in the southern or south-eastern districts of Persia, including Seistan. British interests must inevitably suffer by such concessions, and the Persian Government have themselves recognized and acquiesced in this view on more than one occasion. They gave in October 1897 a written promise to Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran that the customs of Southern Persia should never be placed under foreign control and supervision. When in 1900 the customs revenues were pledged as security for the loan obtained from the Russian Banque des Prêts, a special exception was made of the revenues and ports of Southern Persia, and when Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires in April 1900 called the attention of the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to the interest which the British Government had in the ports of Mohammerah, Bushire, Bunder Abbas, and other ports of the Persian Gulf, and insisted on the right of Her Majesty's Government to be consulted before any change was made in the administration of the Customs at Mohammerah or in the position of the Sheikh, his Excellency replied that not only in Mohammerah, but in every part of Persia where British interests were concerned, the Persian Government, before taking any steps of importance, would consult the British Government. His Majesty's Government have taken note of this assurance with satisfaction, and have only to add that a hypothecation of the internal revenues of any of the southern or south-eastern provinces of Persia as security for a foreign loan would be even more detrimental to Persian interests, and not less objectionable from a British point of view than that of the Customs of the southern ports.

As regards railways, I may remind you that in March 1889 the Shah of Persia gave a distinct promise in writing that Great Britain should have priority in the construction of a southern railway to Tehran; that if concessions for railways were given to others in the north a similar concession should be granted to an English Company in the south; and that no southern railway concession should be granted to any foreign Company without consultation with the British Government. This pledge was brought to the notice of the present Shah in April 1900, and was acknowledged by His Majesty to be of continued and binding validity.

As regards Seistan, I have quite recently, in my despatch of the 9th July, 1901, directed you to call the attention of the Persian Government to the interest which this district has for Great Britain on account of its proximity to India and its position on an important trade route between India and Persia, and to state that we regard it as of the utmost importance that it should remain free from the intrusion of foreign authority in any shape.

In all these matters His Majesty's Government have consistently sought to maintain the continued national existence and the territorial integrity of Persia, and to develop her resources. Their policy in this respect is in strict accordance with the understanding arrived at between Great Britain and Russia in 1834, which was reaffirmed by an exchange of assurances in 1888, pledging the two Governments to respect and promote the integrity and independence of Persia. So long as the Persian Government will work with us cordially upon the lines indicated in this despatch, they will find His Majesty's Government ready to support them in the promotion and protection of what are, in fact, common objects, to the advantage of both countries alike.

If, on the other hand, in the face of our warnings, the Persian Government should elect to encourage the advance of Russian political influence and intervention in these regions in any of the forms which I have indicated above, His Majesty's Government would necessarily have to reconsider their policy; and they would regard themselves as justified in taking such measures as might appear to them best calculated to protect the interests so endangered, even though in the adoption of such measures it might no longer be possible to make the integrity and independence of Persia their first object as hitherto.

[In any conversations which you may have on the subject, you will be careful to state these views in the most friendly and conciliatory language, and to avoid anything which might

bear the appearance of menace or suggest the idea that we are at present suspicious as to the intentions of the Persian Government. You should, in particular, make it clear that no new departure is contemplated by His Majesty's Government, and that we desire, on the contrary to reaffirm as strongly as we are able a policy which has for many years past guided the Government of this country in their dealings with the Persian Government.](³)

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

On the 5th May, 1903, Lord Lansdowne stated in the House of Lords that our policy in the Persian Gulf was to protect and promote British trade in those waters, and that, while our efforts were not directed towards the exclusion of the legitimate trade of other Powers, "we should regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal."(⁴) The realization of such a contingency did not at that moment appear probable, but when, in January last, it was thought possible that the Russian Baltic squadron might attempt to enter Chahbar, His Majesty's Government decided that they would, if necessary, inform the Russian Government that we should regard any Russian occupation of that port as an unfriendly act.

At a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence held on the 22nd March of this year the following conclusions were reached :—

1. It is essential to maintain, and if possible to increase, our influence in Tehran, in order that we may be able to control railway construction in Persia, which is by far the most important factor in the strategic situation, and also for commercial reasons.
2. It should be our object, on commercial as well as on strategic grounds, to maintain the *status quo* in Persia.
3. It is essential to maintain our existing claims on the coast of the Persian Gulf without aggression or ostentation.

Various measures, in addition to the increase of our Consular establishment, have been adopted in pursuance of this policy. In April 1903 we advanced a sum of £200,000, and in September 1904 a further £100,000, to the Persian Government through the Imperial Bank of Persia. The Government of India provided the money for these advances, but half the risks both as regards capital and interest is borne by His Majesty's Government. The loans are secured on the revenues of the Caspian fisheries, with the postal and telegraph revenues and the Customs of Fars and the Persian Gulf as subsidiary securities. But as the first two securities barely cover the loan of 1903, our last advance is wholly secured on the Gulf customs. We are prepared to advance a further £200,000 on certain conditions.

We have sought to foster British trade and influence by every means at our disposal. We have encouraged by moral or financial assistance such enterprises as the Bakhtiari road, uniting Ahwaz with Ispahan, the navigation of the Karun, and the efforts of the Persian Transport Company to improve communications in Central Persia. We have given the Imperial Bank a full measure of support and have assisted them to establish their agencies in provincial towns. We have extended the net-work of our Indo-European telegraph system. Various projects in a similar sense, such as the formation of a native police to assure the security of the southern roads, are still under consideration.

(³) [The last paragraph and the other passages in brackets were not in the text of the despatch as quoted in the memorandum. They have been added by the Editors, as they appear in the original draft.]

(⁴) [Parl. Deb., 4th Ser., Vol. 121, p. 1348.]

A despatch of the 10th July and a private letter of the 2nd October from Sir A. Hardinge, giving his views on the policy to be pursued in the future, are annexed as Appendices to this Memorandum.

Foreign Office, October 31, 1905.

APPENDIX (A).

No. 321 (b).

Sir A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Persia 699.⁽²⁾
(No. 126.) Confidential.
My Lord,

Gulahek, D. June 10, 1905.

R. July 8, 1905.

I had the honour to receive by last messenger Your Lordship's despatch No. 67 of April 26th, enclosing a report of the proceedings of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the subject of Persia and of the remarks made by Your Lordship and the Prime Minister respecting the various points discussed on that occasion.

I observe that Your Lordship stated that with a view to putting an end to the chronic diplomatic contests at Tehran, overtures had been made to the Russian Government for the partition of Persia into spheres of influence, but that these suggestions had been declined.

I trust that I shall not be deemed officious, my opinion on this matter not having been invited, if I venture to submit that no agreement with Russia on the basis of a partition of Persia into "spheres of influence" is practicable—bearing in mind that such spheres in a decadent Eastern Kingdom tend to become, sooner or later, to all intents and purposes, protectorates—unless it provides for the inclusion within the Russian sphere of a portion of the coast of the Persian Gulf, a concession which all past British Governments have regarded as inconsistent with the vital interests of our Indian Empire. It may indeed be doubted whether Russia would regard as satisfactory any partition which finally excluded her from access to the Indian Ocean across Khorassan and Persian Baluchistan, though she might conceivably be satisfied, at least for a time, with the control of the coast line of Arabistan from Mohammerah to Bunder Dilam or Bushire, in return for an undertaking on our part not to use our paramountcy further east in order to fortify Ras Musandim or the opposite islands of Hormuz, Kishm, and Henjam. Her object being to reach the warm water she can never willingly acquiesce in an arrangement which would definitely frustrate it by substituting on the shores of the Persian Gulf the vigorous grasp of Great Britain for the weak and tottering authority of the Shah.

I have, however, always felt, since I have given my mind to the study of the affairs of this country that an understanding with Russia about Persia resting on a different basis though undoubtedly difficult, was not necessarily impossible of attainment.

The consistent policy of Russia in Persia has been gradually and imperceptibly to establish a "veiled protectorate" by subjugating it commercially and financially; isolating it as far as possible from all contact with foreign influences; appropriating its revenues as the security for political loans; preventing it from progressing or developing its resources, except through Russian agencies; and then, having reduced the Shah to a state of complete vassalage and impotence, to rule through him and in his name, by means of authoritative Russian advisers, from the Caspian Sea to the Gulf and from the Turkish to the Indian frontiers. The loan contract of 1900, which made Russia the sole purveyor of money to a bankrupt, corrupt, and spendthrift Court, seemed to have brought her within measurable distance of this goal. There was of course always a slight danger that the Shah might resent the process described above, but in this event she could always count on bringing him into line by a stoppage of supplies, whilst her grip on Khorassan and Azerbaijan, and her power of raising troubles in those provinces as a pretext for intervention, were unfailing means of successful intimidation. There was, and is still, the greater danger that the Persian priesthood and people might attempt to rebel against the alienation of the national revenues and practical sale of the country merely to minister to the amusements of a worthless Prince, but in that case there seemed every probability that an armed interposition by Russia to support the Kajar Dynasty, as we supported that of Mohammed Ali at Cairo, would secure to her as effective a control over Persia as Great Britain now possesses over Egypt.

The one obstacle to the realization of this programme was the possible opposition of Great Britain, but M. Vlassoff, my late Russian colleague, who discussed Persian affairs very freely with

⁽¹⁾ [cp. below, pp. 422-3, No. 381, Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey, Despatch No. 4 of January 3, 1907, R. January 21.]

⁽²⁾ [The text of this despatch has been checked by the original, and a minute by Lord Lansdowne added.]

me, used to say that the advocates of the Russian forward policy in the Middle East placed all their hopes in the event of a Liberal Government in England and could continue to play a waiting but steady game till that event, which was certain sooner or later to come about, nor was I ever able to convince him that on questions of Imperial, and especially Indian, interests the leaders of both our great parties were now agreed.

It may, however, be assumed that the Russian Government now recognizes that it will not be allowed by us to have its way in Persia, and that the advances which we have made and can continue in various ways to make to the Shah through his State Bank, have broken the back of the financial monopoly and control, with all its far reaching results, which Russia fancied her loan contracts had given her. Further that the decision come to by His Majesty's Government to meet any military move which she may make in northern Persia by a corresponding counter-move in the South and East precludes a repetition by England of the rôle played by France during the Arabi rebellion, should Royal extravagance and national insolvency, combined with internal misgovernment and foreign interference in the administration of the revenues, produce the same consequences in Persia as in Egypt and culminate in a fanatical revolt.

It appears to me therefore within the bounds of possibility that once the conflict in the Far East is over, leaving Russia as it must, materially weakened for many years, a recognition of the above facts may induce a reconsideration of her Persian policy, on the lines of some attempt at a provisional understanding with Great Britain, such as that foreshadowed in Your Lordship's conversations with Count Benckendorff during the period which immediately preceded the outbreak of the Japanese war. Russia would not of course finally renounce her aspirations with respect to the Persian Gulf: she would continue to cherish a hope that altered circumstances and perhaps a readjustment of the political forces in Asia due to the entry on the scene of Japan as a Great Power and to the awakening of the Mongolian world, might, in the course of the present century, modify British policy and remould British views on this subject. She would merely recognize that the realization of her aims in the Persian Gulf, like that of her views on Constantinople, must be for the present deferred and would desist from aggressive steps such as the establishment of Consulates, political Banks, and subsidized steamer services in Southern Persia for the purpose of hastening their accomplishment. It might be possible to make her see that if the Shah is allowed to drift on into total bankruptcy by playing on the jealousies of his neighbours and spending political loans advanced first by one and then the other, a crisis must before long supervene, perhaps before she herself is ready for it, which may necessitate active foreign intervention or at least a discussion, however unwelcome to her, as to the future of Persia, with Great Britain, and that the more prudent course, even from the point of view of Russian interests, would be that the British and Russian Governments should come beforehand to some arrangement, like the Austro-Russian understanding respecting the Balkans, for preventing a cataclysm in this country. In other words that both Governments, convinced that a collapse of the Persian Monarchy from internal weakness, is under present circumstances undesirable, and a forced partition of Persia even more so, should agree to co-operate as Austria and Russia have done in the case of European Turkey, for the provisional but effectual preservation of the Shah's Empire as a neutral State in which both have equal interests. To this end it would be necessary that both should agree on a simple programme of elementary reforms in the internal constitution of Persia and should unite to impose the application of this antiseptic treatment, whether the latter liked it or not, on the Persian Government.

It would be beyond the scope of this despatch, which deals only with general principles, to examine the various measures for the reorganization of the Persian finances, army and administration of justice, which such a programme ought to include and which would undoubtedly present many practical but not necessarily insuperable difficulties. I merely submit that the only alternative to the continuation by the two powers of a policy of constant rivalry which must sooner or later precipitate an acute crisis in Persia leading either to war or to a division into spheres of influence, is an agreement between them on the lines of the Münzsteg understanding having for its immediate object the postponement by common action of such a crisis. The basis of the agreement would be, I need hardly say, not any partition of Persian territory into opposite spheres of influence, in which Russia could not acquiesce without abandoning her aspirations as regards the Gulf, but a partition of influence, and control at Tehran for the purpose of arresting the further decomposition of Persia and thus deferring her otherwise inevitable break up, and as its consequence the final cutting off of Russia, unless she is prepared to fight England for it, from access to the shores of the Gulf and Indian seas.

I would again express the hope that in indicating my views on this important subject I shall not appear to have exceeded the limits of my province by presuming to volunteer uninvited opinions with respect to larger issues lying strictly speaking beyond it. My excuse if I have done so must be that British officers in Persia and Central Asia are often brought into contact with cruder and franker expressions of Russian views and aspirations than those formulated by the cautious and conciliatory statesmen who serve as the mouth-pieces of Russian policy in London and St. Petersburg. At the latter Courts the European, here in Asia the Tartar head and beak of the Russian double eagle are most plainly visible, and it may not be amiss that as His Majesty's Representative in Persia I should, even without instructions to do so, lay before Your Lordship what I believe to be the only principles on which an understanding with Russia

as regards our common interests in the middle east is feasible. I would repeat that I do not regard such an understanding as by any means easy but I am not certain in view of recent results of the forward policy of Russia in Manchuria and of the lesson which those results must have taught that it need be dismissed *à priori* as inherently impossible.

I have, &c.

ARTHUR H. HARDINGE.

MINUTE.

I am not very sanguine as to the possibility of an arrang[emen]t with Russia for a joint applic[atio]n of the proposed antiseptic treatment. Would English and Russian officials be likely to interpret it in the same manner? The appeal to the Mür[z]steg scheme as an exemplar is not felicitous.

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APPENDIX (B).

No. 321 (c).

Sir A. Hardinge to Sir T. Sanderson.

My Dear Sanderson,

7, Lower Berkeley Street, London, October 2, 1905.

I return the papers you sent me respecting (1) the Consular establishment in Persia and its cost; (2) the "General question of policy."

On the first you do not I gather desire from me any observations as a Report by the Department is to be prepared. The question is mainly a departmental one, as to the respective shares of expenditure, as between the Treasury and India Office. From my point of view the more Consulates are run by India the better, as it is far easier to get the Government of India to sanction necessary expenses than the home Treasury. India would never, if it was responsible for Mohammerah, have refused the Consul there the launch for which we asked, and the contrast between Meshed and Tabreez, which I successively visited this autumn and last, is very instructive. The former is very smartly kept up, and Sykes gets nearly £2,000 a-year, while his colleague at Tabreez cannot make both ends meet or live on his salary, much less make the display which he ought at the Valiahd's Court. The only suggestion I should make is that when Shiraz is next vacant it should be transferred to India in exchange for Kermanshah.

As to the general question raised in the Indian Government's letter of the 17th August, I have fully explained in my Reports from Tehran my ideas as to the policy which should be adopted, and these ideas have so far commended themselves to Government that they have been in part acted upon, though some of them, such as the acquisition of a control over the Imperial Bank, and a countermove in South-Western as well as in South-Eastern Persia in the event of a Russian invasion of the north have been considered impracticable. It appears to me that there is not much difference in principle (though some in detail) between the views held by the Government of India, which are practically identical with those which I have ventured to submit, and the policy now definitely formulated in London: the main difference is that the Home Government having to take a wider and less local view of the situation in Persia, and of the practical possibilities, in relation to our duties and engagements elsewhere, is inclined to reduce or limit the scope of its contingent action, excluding from it certain areas such as the Bakhtiari country and Ispahan, whose inclusion in it the Government of India was disposed to favour. Since this question was first raised, the Asiatic situation has been so modified by recent events as to make it still more difficult for a person like myself, acquainted only with its Persian aspect, to offer any fresh remarks of utility; but the danger of a financial and political collapse in Persia itself, which may revive it in a practical form, has certainly become more real, or at least has grown nearer, owing to the Ain-ed-Dowleh's failure to reform the finances and stop the increase of the debt. This danger may become acute at a very early date if the Belgian administration, on which the payment of the Russian and English loans depends, is overthrown and the clerical party led to deem itself irresistible.

I have, &c.

A. H. HARDINGE.

No. 322.

Sir A. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/102.

Separate and Confidential.

London, D. December 23, 1905.

Sir,

R. January 3, 1906.

It was thought desirable by your predecessor that I should, on relinquishing my duties as His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, draw up a report, which would be useful to my successor, dealing with the present condition of Persia, as well as with

the principal concrete questions affecting British political and commercial interests in that country. It is difficult to compress within brief dimensions a review of this nature, but it will be my endeavour to treat these various subjects as concisely as is consistent with lucidity, and I shall begin by summarizing the main elements in the Persian political situation, which will necessitate a recapitulation of some of the chief events of the last few years.

Financial Position—Loans.

The integrity and independence of Persia, the maintenance of which may be regarded as the main object of our diplomacy at Tehran, has of late years been threatened by two principal dangers; the first, the acquisition by Russia of an absolutely predominant influence over the Persian state, and the second, the latter's internal decomposition, due mainly to the weakness, extravagance and financial exhaustion of its government.

The former of these two dangers has, owing to the present condition of Russia, ceased, for the immediate present, to be threatening, but the second has within the last year or two shown signs of increasing, and unless something can be done to arrest it, an acute internal crisis in Persian affairs cannot, I think, long be delayed. Its primary cause, though deeper ones lie of course below it, is the personal character of the Shah.

Muzaffer-ed-din Shah is probably the only Prince of the Kajar dynasty, who has shown conspicuous incapacity for the rôle of an autocratic monarch. Naturally kindly and well-meaning, but weak, capricious, and almost totally uneducated, he had lived for more than fifty years, before he came to the throne, in seclusion at Tabreez, as nominal Viceroy of the great Province of Azerbaijan, yet without any real control over its affairs, which were managed by his Vizier, under direct orders from Tehran. He was often kept so short of money there that he had difficulty in paying the expenses of his household; and accordingly, when he ascended the throne, he hastened to recoup himself for these years of leanness by inconceivably reckless extravagance. In this course he was supported and encouraged by a gang of greedy and ignorant Turkish courtiers, who had long been waiting impatiently at Tabreez for his father's death, in order to build up out of the public revenues, to the plunder of which they looked forward, immense private fortunes for themselves. These men had no notion of politics, or of the rudiments of government; their one idea, whilst ministering to the weaknesses and vices of their sovereign, was to kill and cut up the goose with the golden eggs. It was as though Henry V, on ascending the throne of England, had handed over to Falstaff and Poins the control of the national Exchequer. . . .

Probable Attitude of Russia and England in the event of a dissolution of the Persian State.

Assuming that such a collapse were to take place, the question next arises as to what would be the attitude of the two neighbouring Powers, Russia and Great Britain, both of whom are for different reasons deeply interested in the future of Persia. It appears to me evident that the Russian government has long foreseen this eventuality and has shaped its policy in preparation for it. For many years it has done all it could to discourage any measures, which could contribute to the stability or progress of Persia. It has prevented the introduction of railways. It has encouraged the extravagance of the Shah by the facility with which it has granted loans, knowing that he would squander them, and has steadily declined any co-operation or even discussion with England as to the best means of preventing a financial breakdown. It has in fact counted on being able, if the Persian Government became bankrupt, and if as a consequence disturbances broke out through the country, to send a military force across the frontier and re-establish

single-handed the authority of the Kajar dynasty, just as we did that of the Khedives in Egypt at the time of the Arabi rebellion. The effect of such a military intervention would, it doubtless foresaw, secure for Russia a position in Persia analogous to that obtained by Great Britain in Egypt, and the Shah, restored by Russian bayonets would become a mere puppet in the hands of a Russian Resident at Tehran.

His Majesty's Government, alive to this danger, decided, after full consideration of the question, that in the event of internal disturbances in Persia, the isolated action of Russia could not be acquiesced in, and that if, on whatever pretext, Russian troops were to enter Azerbaijan or Khorassan, a corresponding step should be taken by the Government of India in Seistan, or in the Persian Gulf, or in both. The occupation by British troops of Seistan, of Bunder Abbas, and of Bushire would not, in the plan contemplated by them, have assumed the character of a demonstration against Russia. On the contrary it would have been plausibly represented to her as a measure of co-operation, both powers interfering simultaneously, and if Russia were willing, in concert, to defend their respective interests and maintain order in the regions adjacent to their respective frontiers, in view of the inability of the Persian Government to protect them adequately itself. Inasmuch as one of the great objects of Russian policy is to penetrate to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean after gradually converting Persia into a Russian Egypt, it is obvious that a British occupation of either Seistan, lying as it does across the only route from Meshed to the Indian Seas, or of the principal ports of southern Persia, would defeat that object, and would compel the Russian Government to discuss the Persian question with England, and submit to its solution by some compromise acceptable to her.

Although the Russian Government has not been directly informed of this intention on our part, it is probably well aware of its existence, for I was authorised to state to the Amin-es-Sultan in the summer of 1903, when there was talk of a Russian intervention to suppress revolutionary disturbances at Tabreez that any entry of Russian troops into Persian territory for such a purpose would oblige us to take identical measures in the South and East, and I am pretty certain that this information was communicated to the Russian Legation. A similar communication was made by me to the Ain-ed-dowleh, when that Minister assumed office a few months later, and I cannot but suspect that the conviction entertained at St. Petersburg that we should not permit Russia, in the event of a rebellion or civil war in Persia, to pacify the country single-handed, may have combined with other considerations to determine the overtures made by Count Benckendorff to your predecessor just before the outbreak of the Japanese War for some *modus vivendi* as regards the Middle-Eastern question.

Possible Anglo-Russian Understanding.

The outbreak of the War in the Far East put an end to the exchange of views between the Russian and the British Governments on this question before it had got beyond the academic stage, but with the conclusion of peace, the possibility of some such understanding has again been tentatively discussed, and His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg informed me a few weeks ago that, whilst he deemed it unwise for us to display any eagerness to effect a settlement, and thought that the time had hardly yet come for it, he did not believe that it need in itself present any very great difficulties.

My own view has always been that the only basis on which such a settlement could be effected, would be not a partition of Persia into rival spheres of influence, which would mean sooner or later an English Protectorate over the South and the definite abandonment of Russia's aspirations to reach the open Ocean, and would therefore be unacceptable to her—but a suspension of the diplomatic conflict, which has so long raged between the two Powers at Tehran, and an understanding on the

lines of the Austro-Russian Agreement respecting the Balkan Peninsula that both should combine to preserve the existence of Persia as a neutral state, by imposing on the Shah such a simple scheme of financial and administrative reform, as would avert or at least for the present delay the dissolution of the Persian Monarchy.

In the present condition of Russia, any serious negotiations for the attainment of this object are obviously difficult, and could only be entered upon, when some more stable Russian Government has been evolved out of the existing chaos. But, although the internal situation in Persia is growing rapidly worse, some years appear likely to elapse before an active intervention on the part of her neighbours becomes inevitable, so that there is still time for careful consideration of the best methods for dealing with the crisis when it actually arrives. Some persons believe that the death of the Shah and the accession of the Vali-Ahd, who is stronger and a good deal more avaricious, might at the last moment avert it. Personally speaking, I feel little confidence in the capacity of any prince of the Kajar dynasty to carry through unaided the radical reform essential if the country is to be set on its feet again. This dynasty, as always happens after a few generations in the Mahommedan East, with the single exception of Turkey, (an exception due in my belief to the peculiar marriage customs of the house of Othman), has become degenerate and effete, and commands neither affection nor respect in any large section of the Persian population. It would, in fact, in all probability have been overthrown before this, like those of the Zend, of Nadir Shah and of the Sefawis, but for the knowledge that any insurrection against its authority would bring about the armed intervention of Russia or Great Britain, or both, for the preservation of the *status quo* in Persia.

I have tried in the foregoing pages to indicate as clearly as possible the outlines of the Persian political situation in its bearing on the internal condition and foreign relations of the country. I now proceed to deal with concrete British interests, chiefly commercial, in the Shah's dominions. . . .

[I have, &c.]

A[RTHUR] H. H[ARDINGE].

No. 323.

Memorandum communicated to the Persian Minister.

F.O. 371/103.

Foreign Office, January 11, 1906.

It would seem from the communications which the Persian Minister has made to Sir Edward Grey that some apprehension exists at Tehran that the policy and sentiments of the present Ministry are less favourable to the Persian Gov[ernmen]t than those of their predecessors. There is no ground for this impression and the Persian Minister is authorized to assure his Gov[ernmen]t that the sentiments of Sir Edward Grey and his colleagues do not differ from those entertained by the Marquess of Lansdowne and the late Cabinet.

Sir Edward Grey thinks it right however to observe that there seems to have been of late more difficulty than usual in obtaining a satisfactory settlement of various matters on which it has been found necessary to address representations to the Persian Gov[ernmen]t.

Foreign Office, January 11, 1906.

III.—THE PERSIAN LOAN QUESTION, 1906.

No. 324.

*Mr. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.**Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

F.O. 371/169.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 32.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 16: Loan.⁽¹⁾

Mushir-ed-Dowleh informs me that it is absolutely necessary for Persian Government to contract loan at once, and I hear on good authority that Russian Legation have been approached.

Grand Vizier's position very uncertain, and dependent on whether he can raise money. Administrator of Customs states financial position becoming daily more critical. Would you reconsider matter if entire control of money lent were placed in English hands by Persian Government? Mushir-ed-Dowleh is sending his son to me Saturday, and I suspect he may put above question.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram of January 23, 1906, reports the refusal of His Majesty's Government to grant a loan of £800,000 as requested by the Grand Vizier.]

No. 325.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.

F.O. 371/169.

Foreign Office, February 2, 1906.

Tel. (No. 22.)

D. 1.10 P.M.

Your tele[gra]m No. 32 (of Feb[ruary] 1) (Persian Loan).⁽¹⁾

We cannot hold out any prospect of reconsidering decision as to proposed loan.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 326.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

St. Petersburg, D. February 7, 1906.

(No. 111.)

R. February 19, 1906.

Sir,

I have the honour to state that I addressed a private letter to Count Lamsdorff, copy of which I have the honour to enclose, embodying your Telegram No. 34 of the 2nd February on the subject of financial aid to Persia.

To-day I attended Count Lamsdorff's official reception and spoke to him on the subject.

His Excellency informed me that on the preceding day he had laid the letter before the Emperor and that His Majesty had charged him to express his satisfaction at this communication. Count Lamsdorff added that he was quite of the opinion that an end should be put to the practice under which the Persian Government was able to obtain money from the English or the Russian Government by playing off one against the other. Besides which the service rendered to Persia, by offering a loan, was much like that afforded by a moneylender to a spendthrift—which only made him reckless and plunged him deeper into embarrassment.

He expressed his satisfaction at the frank nature of the communication and asked me to inform you accordingly.

I gathered from his language that he regarded the idea of a loan to Persia with disfavour and did not press him as to the suggestion that if the Russian Government thought a loan advisable His Majesty's Government was prepared to enter into negotiations on the subject. Nor did I allude to the possibility of the repetition of the circumstances attending the loan of 1899 in which year the Russian Government, although Lord Salisbury had expressed his willingness to enter into negotiations for a joint loan and while the negotiations were pending, had sanctioned a large advance, nominally made to the Persian Government by a private bank. This question was fully discussed between Count Lamsdorff and Sir Charles Hardinge on the 6th ultimo (see His Excellency's Despatch No. 32),⁽¹⁾ and both Count Lamsdorff and Count Witte must be fully aware of the effect on public opinion in England of what would appear after the formal and written communication just made by order of His Majesty's Government and accepted with satisfaction by the Emperor, as little short of a breach of faith. I alluded however to the language held by Count Lamsdorff to His Majesty's Ambassador and reported by him in the above-mentioned Despatch, and observed that the communication I had made was based on the assurances exchanged on that occasion.

I have, &c.

CECIL-SPRING-RICE.

Enclosure in No. 326.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Count Lamsdorff.

Particulière et Confidentielle.

Cher Comte Lamsdorff,

23 janvier/5 février, 1906.

Comme Votre Excellence le sait, Sir Edward Grey a dit au Comte Benckendorff, dans une conversation qu'il a eue avec Son Excellence le 13 décembre (n.s.), que, tout en admettant que le moment n'était pas opportun pour entrer en pourparlers en vue d'arriver à une entente ayant pour objet de régler les différences entre les deux pays, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté de sa part, pendant le délai inévitable éviterait toute action de nature à rendre plus difficiles les négociations qui auraient lieu dans ce but, ou de compromettre la possibilité d'un arrangement éventuel.

Se basant sur ce principe, Sir E. Grey a récemment déclaré au Gouvernement persan en réponse à des représentations au sujet de l'état actuel des finances persanes, que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique n'était pas disposé à sanctionner une avance pécuniaire en faveur du Gouvernement du Schah.

En faisant part à Votre Excellence, à titre confidentiel de ce qui précède je suis chargé de L'informer que le Gouvernement britannique entend que le Gouvernement russe, de sa part, animé d'un esprit de réciprocité, et du désir de ne pas introduire dans la situation actuelle un élément nouveau ne permettra pas que le Gouvernement persan reçoive un secours pécuniaire des autorités financières russes.

Si toutefois, pour quelque raison, le Gouvernement Impérial le croit désirable de prêter un appui financier à la Perse, et qu'il veut bien considérer la question de concert avec le Gouvernement Britannique, je suis chargé d'assurer Votre Excellence que Sir Edward Grey est tout prêt à entrer en discussion à ce sujet, dans un esprit de conciliation.

Veillez, &c.

CECIL SPRING RICE.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 622-3, *Appendix III.*]

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.

F.O. 371/106.

(No. 34.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 6, 1906.

The Persian Minister asked to see me to-day, and told me that he had come in order that he might inform the Shah whether the British and Russian Governments had an understanding between each other. I said that we desired to be on friendly terms with the Russian Government and had made that known, and that they also desired to be on friendly terms with us. The Persian Minister continued to press me as to whether we had any definite understanding in the sense, for instance, that we had an understanding with France. I said we had not got any definite agreement with Russia about details, as we had with France. The Persian Minister then asked whether we had an intention of making any such agreement. I said that it was impossible to say anything about intentions. This sort of thing depended on circumstances. We had had difficulties with the French Government with regard to Egypt, Newfoundland, and other questions, and we had removed these by a definite agreement. Should we in the future have difficulties with the Russian Government, we no doubt might be desirous of removing these by agreement in the same way. But at the present moment I did not think we had any difficulty with Russian Government which it was necessary to discuss in detail.

He asked me what our views were with regard to Persia, and I said that we desired to see the integrity and independent sovereignty of Persia maintained.

He then pressed me very much on the subject of the loan which the Persian Government desired, and asked me what we meant by saying that we could not lend money under present circumstances. I said that I thought the Persian Government had borrowed enough money already and that we should not, by lending them more, be doing anything to promote the strength of Persia. The Persian Minister asked me whether we would not do at least what Lord Lansdowne had promised to do when he offered to lend £150,000 or £200,000. I replied that when I came into office I found that that offer of Lord Lansdowne had not been accepted by the Persian Government. They had put forward an entirely new demand for £800,000, which we were not prepared to lend, nor were we prepared to renew the offer of the smaller loan, which had not been accepted and had been put aside by the Persian Government. The Persian Minister then pressed me further as to whether we would lend money to Persia, if the Persians would use it to pay off the Russian loan, but I said we could not entertain this proposal. He then asked me what advice I would give should the Persian Government appeal to British capitalists for a loan, and should the British capitalists apply to the Foreign Office for advice. I said that we could not advise any British capitalist to lend money to Persia without guaranteeing the loan or in some way taking responsibility for it ourselves, and as we were not prepared ourselves to lend money to Persia I did not see how we could facilitate Persia's borrowing it elsewhere. He urged that if we would not lend the money the Persian Government would have to apply to Russia, and pressed me for advice as to what they should do. I said that I was very sorry not to be able to give a favourable answer or to give the particular assistance for which he asked, but that as I was not giving that assistance it was not possible for me to give advice with regard to the borrowing of money.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/108.

(No. 278.) Confidential.

Sir,

Constantinople, D. April 24, 1906.

R. April 30, 1906.

In my Telegram No. 65 of yesterday I had the honour to report that the German Ambassador was giving proof of considerable interest in the Turco-Persian frontier question and was supporting the representations made by my Russian colleague and myself and I added that Baron von Marschall's action appeared to me very significant. I now take leave to supplement my Telegram with the following observations.

The appointment of a tried and able official like Monsieur Stemrich to the post of German Minister at Tehran, is, as I pointed out in my despatch No. 269 Confidential of the 21st instant,⁽¹⁾ sufficiently indicative in itself of a more active policy in Persia, and unless I am very much mistaken, the new German Envoy will play a much more important rôle in Persia than did his predecessor Count Rex. I am willing to believe that the anxious desire shown by Baron von Marschall to interfere in the dispute provoked by the Turkish occupation of Passova is in some measure due to apprehension lest a serious conflict in the Azerbidjan district should extend to Northern Mesopotamia and induce an unsettled condition in the country to be traversed by the Bagdad Railway; but I am still more disposed to regard His Excellency's intervention as a sign of his Government's desire to prove to the Shah that Germany takes an interest in Persian affairs and regards them as naturally falling within the sphere of her influence and action.

Baron von Marschall is not particularly addicted to paying visits to his colleagues, but the other day he called at the Persian Embassy and took some trouble to impress on Prince Riza Khan that he had spoken very seriously about the Turco-Persian imbroglio to Izzet Pasha, the Sultan's Second Secretary, in whose hands the conduct of the question has been placed, and how he had pointed out the illegality of the Turkish action in occupying and retaining possession of Passova which, being to the East of the debatable zone laid down in the Anglo-Russian Commissioners' map of 1869, must incontestably be in Persian territory. He expressed also the wish to be kept informed of the course of the negotiations and contrived throughout his conversation to convey the impression that Germany was interested equally with the two mediating Powers in the question and that his benevolent interference merited the grateful recognition of the Persian Government. The Persian Ambassador appears to have fallen into the trap at once, and to have thankfully expressed his appreciation of Baron von Marschall's comforting assurances and unsolicited support.

When His Highness told me what had occurred I suggested that he might do well to secure the support not only of Germany but also of France and the other Great Powers, as I had no doubt that all the Ambassadors at Constantinople would be as ready to afford reasonable support and aid in composing the quarrel as our German colleague had been.

Prince Riza Khan replied that he would explain the situation to the French Ambassador and the Italian Chargé d'Affaires and invoke their good offices and I myself took an opportunity this afternoon of acquainting Monsieur Constans with the present phase of this question.

Another symptom of Germany's interest in Persian affairs, which we cannot afford to overlook and which would seem to be part and parcel of some policy for a definite end, is the recent establishment by the Hamburg-American Company of a service of steamers to the Persian Gulf.

In face of the above facts it appears to me very probable that if Great Britain and Russia do not very soon come to an agreement with regard to their respective interests

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. The despatch deals only with personal details referring to Herr Stemrich.]

in Persia, they may find themselves confronted there with Germany very much as did France in Morocco. Indeed I am almost afraid that the psychological moment for an arrangement *à deux* may be already passed.

As I walked with my Russian Colleague from the Persian Embassy, where we met yesterday to discuss the frontier dispute, I mentioned to him my idea that Baron von Marschall's attitude in the question boded a more active interest in Persian affairs which might make us regret that we had tarried so long in coming to an understanding. Monsieur Zinoviev replied that things did wear that appearance, but that as I knew he had always been in favour of an understanding with England, and he had not failed to express that opinion to his Government, feeling that he was entitled to do so on account of his intimate acquaintance with and long residence in Persia.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 329.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/125.

(No. 213.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 11, 1906.

I reminded Count Benckendorff in conversation to-day that, since receiving the friendly message from Count Lamsdorff some weeks ago, indicating that proposals might be made by us for a definite agreement on matters of mutual interest, I had postponed the idea of our making any such proposals, owing to the change in progress in the Russian Government and the latter's natural preoccupation with internal affairs. But within the last day or two a report had reached me that Persia was negotiating with Germany for a loan. I had originally told Count Benckendorff that, as regards Persia and other subjects of that kind, we would for the present do our utmost to preserve the *status quo* in order to keep the door open for a subsequent arrangement with Russia. But if the *status quo* was to be disturbed in the interval by third persons, it would make a future arrangement more and more difficult, and I had therefore thought it right to tell Count Benckendorff of the report which I had heard.

I said it was for the Russian Government to consider what steps they thought it in their interest to take. I held that it was wasting money to lend it to the present Persian Government. But I did think it very desirable to preserve the *status quo*. Possibly a joint loan by Russia and Great Britain might be worth considering as a temporary expedient, simply to preserve things as they were till we could settle the whole question; though I thought Russia, by conditions she had already made with Persia, might have grounds on which to object by herself to the Persian Government's contracting a loan.

Count Benckendorff asked me whether the information with regard to a German loan came from a source which made me believe it, and how it was being arranged.

I said the report had reached me in the barest possible form. A million was named as the amount of the loan. But I was not sure even as to the amount, nor did I know through what channels it was being arranged, nor was I certain of the conditions which might be attached to it. I did, however, think that the report which had reached me might not be without foundation. But the Russian Government no doubt had means as good as ours for making their own inquiries.

There was another matter which it was necessary for me to mention.

The Bagdad Railway had not recently been brought before us officially in any way, but I gathered that it was likely to be revived. Questions were being asked me in the House of Commons, and from other indications I expected that we might soon have to give an answer as to whether we were prepared to participate. We were not prepared to participate in it unless France also did so; and we did not wish to go into it unless

Russia as well would take part. The Bagdad Railway, if completed, would form an important commercial outlet. I knew very well the interest which such an outlet had always had for the Russian Government, and I realised that if this outlet was to be made on the Persian Gulf, it was something in which they would naturally feel they ought to have some share. It was for them to consider, therefore, whether it would not be better, instead of attempting to block the project of the Railway, which might be destined to be made nevertheless, that they should make up their minds as to the conditions and methods by which Russian interest might be brought into the scheme. All I had to say was that we would consider very favourably any suggestions of this kind which the Russian Government might have to make.

I told Count Benckendorff I did not wish this to be regarded as an official communication, because at present we were not being asked for any decision; but I foresaw that we might have to come to a decision before very long, and, as this too would be an alteration in the *status quo* in a part of the world in which we were both interested, I was anxious to take no step on our part without letting the Russian Government know, and it was very desirable that they should come to a decision as to what their own interest and policy in the matter should be.

Count Benckendorff told me that M. Cambon had already had conversations with him and M. Nelidoff on this subject.

I said I had spoken to M. Cambon some time ago, but my reason for mentioning it now was that the questions which were being asked me in Parliament made me think that the time when we might have to come to a decision was nearer than I had thought, and it was desirable that the Russian Government should also be prepared.

[I am, &c.]

E[DWARD] G[REY].

No. 330.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, May 12, 1906.

D. 4.42 P.M.

R. 5 P.M.

F.O. 371/109.

Tel. (No. 89.)

My tel[egram] No. 88 of yesterday. Persia.⁽¹⁾

Russian F[oreign] O[ffice] has no precise information but hear that M. Naus has changed his policy since his return from Constantinople where he had frequent conferences with German Amb[assador] who proposed to him a Berlin loan in return for certain concessions to Germany.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 331.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 404.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 26, 1906.

R. July 9, 1906.

I mentioned to Monsieur Isvolsky yesterday that it had been reported from an unofficial source that the Persian Government were allowing it to be understood that an offer had been made to them of a Russian loan of two million sterling. I said that no credence was attached to this report, as it was not the first time that the Persian Authorities had allowed reports of this nature to be disseminated, possibly

with the object of inducing others to come forward with offers of a similar character. I only mentioned this report to him in order to place him on his guard, as I knew that the Russian Government would abide by the understanding regarding Persian loans which had been made with his predecessor, Count Lamsdorff.

Monsieur Isvolsky thanked me for having alluded to the report, but he could assure me that since he had been in office there had been no question of any loan to Persia. He added that at the present moment, moreover, the Russian Government or Russian Banks were not in a position to lend money to anyone.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 332.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/169.

Foreign Office, August 13, 1906.

Tel. (No. 219.)

D. 1.35 P.M.

Count Benckendorff says that M. Isvolsky desires in view of internal troubles in Persia to come to some sort of *modus vivendi* with us.

You might tell M. Isvolsky that Sir C. Spring Rice, who starts early in September will be instructed to keep in touch with M. Hartwig at Tehran; that we propose to adhere to a policy of non-interference as far as possible and that British subjects inland will be told in case of danger to them to go to the Ports; that Sir C. Spring Rice will probably ask his colleagues to agree to some limitation of the custom of taking "Bast"; that subject to these precautions we propose to let crisis in Persia take its course, but are ready to agree with the Russians that the Valiahd should be favourably regarded as successor, if the Shah dies.

This should not be allowed to forestall or complicate subsequent negotiations as to agreement about Persia; if M. Isvolsky raises that you should receive his views and say that we will consider them.

No. 333.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 15, 1906.

F.O. 371/169.

D. 8.56 P.M.

Tel. (No. 185.)

R. 10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 219.⁽¹⁾

I communicated to the Minister for Foreign Affairs verbally instructions which Sir C. Spring-Rice would take with him to Tehran, explaining that these were not to prejudice any negotiation we might subsequently undertake on the general question of Persia.

His Excellency said he was sure that the British and Russian Ministers would co-operate cordially together.

(¹) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 334.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.

F.O. 371/169.

Tel. (No. 112.)

Foreign Office, August 16, 1906.

D. 12 P.M.

Your Russian colleague has been instructed to concert with you as to adoption of any steps, which may assist towards calming situation in Persia. Should any new necessity arise you should endeavour to co-operate with him. We desire to avoid giving any ground for an impression that recent events have been encouraged as an opportunity for interference in Persian affairs or to exploit the situation at the expense of Russia.

(Repeat to St. Petersburg, No. 231.)

No. 335.

Mr. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.

Tehran, September 1, 1906.

F.O. 371/110.

Tel. (No. 227.)

D. 1:20 P.M.

R. 6:45 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram. Meshed-Seistan line.⁽¹⁾

Grand Vizier yesterday admitted to me that orders had been given to transfer instruments at Meshed from the Persian to the Russian office, but denied that there was any intention of making further concessions. I pointed out to His Highness that His Majesty's Government would view with surprise and regret fact that his first act as Grand Vizier had been to hand over to Russian control a line (?) conducting down to our Indian frontier, and said that we should most certainly demand a *quid pro quo*, and that it would probably be a large one.

His Highness was evidently much concerned at this view of the matter, and protested that Shah's signature had been given long before he had become Grand Vizier.

Subsequently he sent his son to me with the original Russian note and the Shah's Minute in order to prove that the matter had been arranged before his access to power. I promised to tell you this, but pointed out that it in no way affected actual position.

I took the opportunity to explain to the Grand Vizier's son, with the aid of a map, that the control over the line would enable Russians to place a whole string of agents along Afghan border right down to our Indian frontier. I also showed that, in the event of trouble between Persia and Afghanistan, Persians had by their own act put it in the power of the Russians to cut off at will all telegraphic communication between Tehran and the whole eastern frontier of Persia. This was the one line of all others that the Persians ought never to have let out of their hands. The only remedy, I said, was the linking up of Seistan with the Central Persian system, or, in other words, concession of Kuh-Malik-Siah extension. He seemed impressed with this argument.

I finally urged him not to make any further concessions to the Russians on the line, and, above all, not to let Seistan pass out of their hands.

(1) [Tel. No. 226 from Mr. Grant Duff of August 30, 1906, states the Persian Government was about to hand over the control of the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line to the Russian Government. The Persian Minister of Telegraphs was ready to postpone effecting the transfer for two days in the hope of British intervention. While he wanted to retain control of the line himself, he would have preferred to hand it over to Great Britain rather than to Russia.]

I think that Grand Vizier is thoroughly alarmed, and if His Majesty's Government will impress on Persian Legation that they regard matter very seriously, I believe that we might now press for the Kuh-Malik-Siah extension with fair hope of success.

I have, of course, not indicated that His Majesty's Government would consider extension alone to be adequate compensation.

MINUTES.

The unsatisfactory part of this question, apart from the material side, is that it is a modification of the *status quo* which we have been so careful to maintain recently in Persia, and I think that this aspect of the question may legitimately be pointed out to M. Isvolsky by Sir A. Nicolson, who might be told that we shall expect a counter concession.

C. H.

Yes.

E. G.

The Persians may have done it of themselves without recent pressure from the Russians in order to predispose Russia to lend money; or M. Hartwig may have asked for it as a *quid pro quo* for the prestige gained by us through the abnormal hospitality of our Legation.

E. G.

No. 336.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 575.)

St. Petersburg, D. September 1, 1906.

Sir,

R. September 10, 1906.

M. Isvolsky sent me word yesterday afternoon that he would like to call upon me, as he wished to speak to me on certain matters. His Excellency paid me a visit in the course of the afternoon, and said that he wished to inform me that the Persian Government had been pressing the Russian Minister at Teheran to procure for them an immediate advance of three million tomans (about £500,000) and also a loan of ten million tomans (about £1,650,000). They had stated to M. Hartwig that their financial condition was exceedingly precarious, and that if his Government would render them the above service, they would subscribe to any conditions which might be required. They further added that the British Government had been offering them financial assistance in return for concessions of a political character, but that they preferred to address themselves in the first instance to the Russian Government. They intimated that if neither the Russian nor the British Government were disposed to assist them, they would apply to Germany.

M. Isvolsky said that Sir C. Spring Rice had written a private note to Count Lamsdorff in January last,⁽¹⁾ which had remained without a written reply; but that on the note, which M. Isvolsky produced from his portfolio, Count Lamsdorff had written a minute to the effect that he had informed Sir C. Spring Rice verbally that the Russian Government were in accord with the principles enunciated in his communication.

M. Isvolsky observed that he wished to act in harmony with the spirit of what he termed the "tacit agreement" of January last, and he had therefore communicated to me the steps which the Persian Government had recently taken. There was, he said, little doubt that the financial condition of Persia was almost desperate, and that he wished to consult with His Majesty's Government as to the best means of affording relief and in what measure assistance could be rendered. He would be glad to know what information I had received in regard to the financial situation in Persia, and also what were the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 379, No. 326, *encl.*]

I told M. Isvolsky that, in the first place, I was sure that my Government would highly appreciate the loyal and frank step which he had been good enough to take; and that in the second place, I could assure him that no offer of any kind had been made to the Persian Government on our part, and that their assertion that financial relief had been tendered was an old device of the Persian authorities. I had no special data at that moment in my memory as to the financial condition of Persia, but that I had little doubt that it was extremely unsatisfactory. I did not know what view you would take as to the best means of overcoming the financial difficulty: but it seemed to me that it would be desirable, in the first place, to obtain some expert and trustworthy information as to the amount which would be needed to meet the most pressing necessities and that then the two Governments might consult together as to whether an advance might not be made in common. Perhaps it might be found necessary to have some control as to the expenditure of the advance, if one were made, as otherwise the funds might be squandered uselessly. I added that it would be better if the Persian Government could be restrained from applying to other quarters, such as Germany, for financial assistance.

To this latter remark M. Isvolsky fully agreed, and said that as both Russia and Great Britain had large interests in Persia it was desirable that they should work together without the intervention of third parties. His Excellency said that these and other matters concerning the present situation in Persia which Sir C. Spring Rice and M. Hartwig might discuss were not to prejudice any arrangement which the Governments of Great Britain and Russia might hereafter conclude in regard to our future respective relations and attitudes towards the general question of Persia. I said that this was also, I knew, the view of my Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 337.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/169.

Foreign Office, September 3, 1906.

Tel. (No. 262.)

D. 2.40 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 202 (of Aug[ust] 31). Persia.⁽¹⁾ It is now several months since Persian Government pressed us most urgently for a loan and were definitely refused.⁽²⁾ I assume that since then they have tried other sources and their renewed application to Russia is evidence that they have failed to obtain anything. If however Russian Gov[ernmen]t think there is danger of money being lent by any other source in terms, which would introduce undesirable complications in Persian question,⁽³⁾ we will discuss question of making an advance in common and for this purpose instruct Grant Duff to ascertain in conjunction with his Russian colleague how much is required, and how we can secure that it should be applied to objects of real necessity. In view however of uncertainty of Shah's health and consequent instability of present Gov[ernmen]t in Persia it would be more useful if a loan could be deferred. I assume that Russia agrees to supporting the Valiahd as successor in that event a loan might enable a better start to be made with a new Gov[ernmen]t. A loan if made now should at any rate be confined to bare necessities required to carry on for a short period.

(1) [This telegram gave the substance in shorter form of Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 575 of September 1, 1906. v. immediately preceding document.]

(2) [v. *supra*, p. 378, Nos. 324-5.]

(3) [*cp. supra*, pp. 382-3, No. 329.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 5, 1906.

F.O. 371/169.

D. 8.6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 205.)

R. 9.45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 262: Persia.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs will send instructions to the Russian Minister at Tehran to obtain, in concert with Mr. Grant Duff, information as to the amount of advance really required, and to ascertain if some means could be taken that it should be properly applied.

I gave his Excellency your views as to the loan, and he appeared to agree with them.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 339.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Foreign Office, September 5, 1906.

. . . .⁽²⁾ As regards Persia, the sooner Isvolsky can be invited to make suggestions the better. We are of this opinion since we do not know at all upon what basis they would wish to negotiate and we are not yet quite prepared to say what we are ready to concede. I keep on impressing upon the I[ndia] O[ffice] the absolute necessity of coming to some definite decision as to what our policy is to be, and that there is no time to lose. I think I shall succeed in getting an expression of opinion from them but it may take a few weeks. The pourparlers are however not advancing rapidly which is to our advantage, but it would be very useful if you could get Isvolsky to express his own ideas.

Now you will have received Grant Duff's tel[egram] 227 about the Meshed-Seistan Telegraph which is very unsatisfactory.⁽³⁾ What is however the most unsatisfactory part of this question, apart from the material side, is that it is a modification of the *status quo* which we have been so careful to maintain recently in Persia and Sir E. Grey thinks that this aspect of the question may legitimately be pointed out to Isvolsky by you and that if this concession is confirmed we shall have to consider what counter-concession we must demand.

While writing the above to you Benckendorff came to see me and I spoke to him in the above sense. He assured me that Isvolsky will be strongly opposed to any such step and that he is not pleased with Hartwig's proceedings at Tehran. He begged me to send a tel[egram] to St. P[etersburgh] but not to mention that he had advised it. I am going to do so as soon as I have a moment to turn round in.

Since beginning this letter I have settled with the I[ndia] O[ffice] the Afghan instr[uctio]ns⁽⁴⁾ which I enclose for your conf[identia]l information but which have not yet been approved by Sir E. Grey, so please sit on them in the meanwhile.

The advantage in sending them to you now is that I can tel[egram] to you any alterations which Sir E. Grey may wish to make before you act on them.

In great haste,

Y[ou]rs ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The opening sentences of this letter are purely personal in character.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 385-6, No. 335.]

⁽⁴⁾ [These are printed, *infra*, p. 526, No. 472, *encl.* There is no copy of them attached to this letter in the Carnock MSS.]

No. 340.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 588.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 6, 1906.

R. September 17, 1906.

I informed M. Isvolsky yesterday that His Majesty's Government had received some months ago an application from the Persian Government for a loan, but that the latter had been told that this request could not be entertained.⁽¹⁾ In respect to the recent application for an advance and a loan, I told His Excellency that my Government were of opinion that if some financial aid were really required and if the Persian Government were likely to seek it elsewhere than in England and Russia, you were prepared to send instructions to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran to ascertain, in conjunction with the Russian Minister, what amount would suffice to meet urgent requirements and also what means could be taken to assure that the advance was properly applied. In respect to a loan I said that you considered that, owing to the condition of the health of the Shah and the uncertainty of the immediate political future in Persia, it would be advisable to defer, if possible, embarking on so serious a matter as a loan. Moreover as we understood that the Russian Government were in accord with us in supporting the succession of the Valiahd it would be advisable to enable His Highness to start his reign with our common financial assistance should a loan be eventually necessary. I had prefaced my remarks, as I am sure you would have wished me to do, by expressing your appreciation of the loyal and friendly communication which His Excellency had made to me, as reported in my Despatch No. 575 of the 1st instant.⁽²⁾

M. Isvolsky took note of what I had said, and stated that he would telegraph to the Russian Minister to place himself in communication with Mr. Grant Duff. He added that he presumed that the British and Russian Representatives at Teheran were not themselves to decide the amount and mode of making the advance, but merely to procure the necessary information for the subsequent decision of their respective Governments. I said that this, I was sure, was also your view.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 378, Nos. 324-5.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 386-7, No. 336.]

IV.—THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, 1906-7.

No. 341.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/126.

Tel. (No. 272.)

Foreign Office, September 7, 1906.

D. 1.15 P.M.

You are authorised to open discussion with M. Isvolsky on Afghanistan on the basis of the instructions enclosed in Sir C. Hardinge's private letter to you of the 5th inst[ant].⁽¹⁾

You should also inform M. Isvolsky that if he desires to discuss Persia we shall be ready to receive any proposals put forward by him without waiting till the discussion on Afghanistan is concluded.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 388, No. 339, and note ⁽⁴⁾.]

No. 342.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/110.

Foreign Office, September 7, 1906

Tel. (No. 274.)

D. 5.45 P.M.

Meshed-Seistan Telegraph. Mr. Grant Duff's tel[egram] No. 227.⁽¹⁾

You should take an early opportunity of pointing out to M. Isvolsky that if the news of the transfer of the Meshed-Seistan Tel[egram] line to Russian control is confirmed an important modification of the *status quo* which we have been so careful to maintain recently in Persia will have been created. We can hardly believe that such a step can have received his authorisation, but, if so, it will become necessary to consider what counter-concession we may be compelled to demand.

The Meshed-Seistan line runs so close to the frontier of Afghanistan that a change in its control will require some step on the part of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to secure their interests, unless the matter can be adjusted by discussion with the Russian Gov[ernment]; in this connection I would draw your attention to suggestion 3 in Viceroy's telegram of September 3rd.⁽²⁾ which seems a possible solution.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 385-6, No. 335.]

⁽²⁾ [This suggestion was to the effect that a proposal should be made to Persia for the transfer to Russia of the control of the whole line from Meshed to Tehran and to Great Britain of the control of the whole Meshed-Seistan line. It was communicated to M. Isvolski by Sir A. Nicolson, and is referred to, *infra*, p. 394, No. 349, and p. 399, No. 353.]

No. 343.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 8, 1906.

F.O. 371/110.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 214.)

R. 11.10 P.M.

Meshed-Seistan Telegraph.

Minister for Foreign Affairs spontaneously spoke to me this afternoon on above question, and read me a telegram from Russian Ambassador in London reporting a conversation with Sir C. Hardinge. His Excellency assured me this was the first he had heard of any such project, and that on inquiry in his Department he had been told that the Russian Minister on his own initiative had made some arrangement with the Persian authorities as to some interchange of telegraph apparatuses, but being a minor technical question had not been considered sufficiently important to submit to him. He asked me what I knew.

I said that my information was that a Concession had been given, or was on the point of being given, to the Russians to take complete control of the telegraph line, and this had naturally caused some surprise as being a disturbance of the *status quo*. I added that I was expecting a telegram on which I could speak to him on the subject, and that when I received it I would call on him.

His Excellency said he would never (?authorize) any disturbance of the *status quo*, and that he had never heard of so large a measure as I had indicated. By the time I called on him he would have more information on the subject, but that matter had come as a complete surprise to him.

I am sure he was sincere.

No. 344.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, September 14, 1906.*

F.O. 371/169.

D. 12:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 220.)

R. 2:30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 290.⁽¹⁾

Joint advance to Persian Government.

I communicated to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] yesterday evening the conditions on which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]t would be prepared to join with Russian Government in meeting an advance.

His Excellency seemed to see no objection in principle to what I proposed but said he could not give a reply offhand. He told me that he had been informed that a delegate from the German Bank would arrive at Tehran at the end of this month and that probably Persian Government would inform him of our conditions. His Excellency seemed to fear that German delegate would offer an advance without any conditions at all which would be attractive to Persian Government, and he appeared anxious that our joint advance should consequently be arranged as soon as possible. His Excellency appeared also to doubt whether it would be prudent in these circumstances to attach conditions to our advance but he did not actually say so.

He inquired what guarantees Russian Government could secure: and I told him that he had the whole of northern and western Persia wherein to seek them. I did not allude to joint guarantee of customs in western ports of the Gulf as it seemed unnecessary for the moment. He asked if I would give him a memorandum as soon as possible as to our proposals and I said I would do so very confidentially.

The Emperor is on a yachting cruise till next Tuesday and M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] will have to submit the matter to H[is] M[ajesty's] consideration.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It refers to the conditions on which the loan might be granted. These are sufficiently indicated in Sir A. Nicolson's despatches of September 20, and September 24, *infra*, pp. 393-4, Nos. 348-9.]

No. 345.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, September 14, 1906.*

F.O. 371/169.

D. 12:35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 221.) Very confidential.

R. 4:30 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

My impression is that Minister for Foreign Affairs will make no difficulty as to assenting to our conditions, as Germany is interested apparently in financially assisting Persia. (Group omitted: ? He would) be disposed to exercise pressure on Persian Government to apply to Russia and to us alone, and to refuse other aid.

He would like, I think, to see joint advance accomplished fact before arrival of German Delegate, and thus be able to explain that Persians applied to both of us in the first instance, and that we had met her wishes; but I have doubts if matter were still an open question when German Delegate arrived that he would exercise active pressure on Persian Government to refuse any German offer.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

These are my first impressions, but I may have to alter them when I have further discussed the matter with Minister for Foreign Affairs. I shall see him again on Monday, by which time he will have had opportunities of consulting others, and I may find that his views have undergone a change.

No. 346.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.

F.O. 371/112.

Foreign Office, September 16, 1906.

Tel. (No. 142.)

D. 11'30 A.M.

Your telegram No. 244.⁽¹⁾

Refugees.

Russian Ambassador has communicated views of his Government on joint action proposed by you.

Telegram from them expresses gratification at implied desire for establishment of joint action in Persia but states that Russian Government consider it doubtful whether joint representations would have desired effect, and that a joint audience of Shah might be misinterpreted as implying interference in internal affairs of the country and might furnish those elements which are hostile to England and Russia with a weapon and argument which it would be easy to use against them.

Russian Government suggest that you should concert with the Russian Minister as to tendering friendly advice to the Persian Government with a view to securing the pacification of the country but that it should be given by each of you separately.

(Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 313.)

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It refers to the proposal for joint Anglo-Russian representations to the Shah in connection with his refusal to sign the proposed Regulation for the Assembly which had led certain of the leaders of the people's party to take refuge in the British Legation. M. Hartwig had said he would refer to St. Petersburg for instructions.]

No. 347.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 17, 1906.

F.O. 371/169.

D. 3'20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 225.) Secret and Confidential.

R. 5'45 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me his personal views were in favour of line which I had submitted, viz., from Birjand to Bunder Abbas, but that he must consult the Emperor and his colleagues. He anticipated some objections, but would combat them. He said that we were opening up the whole question of Persia, as to which he did not complain. On the contrary, he considered that we should delimitate our respective spheres of influence as soon as possible, but not associate them with a simple advance or even (?) a serious loan.

⁽¹⁾ [Tel. No. 224 from Sir A. Nicolson of September 17, 1906, states that M. Isvolski was of opinion that the question of the spheres of influence in Persia should be connected with the Anglo-Russian loan, but not with the preliminary joint advance to be made to the Persian Government. The substance of the rest of the telegram is contained in Sir A. Nicolson's No. 636, v. immediately succeeding document.]

He hoped to be able to give me the opinions of the Emperor and his colleagues in a day or two, and in the meantime he begged me not to telegraph officially on the subject.

He hinted that in Russian sphere of influence access to some part of Gulf would be necessary. I on my part hinted that I did not think this would present an insuperable difficulty.

MINUTE.

If we take the Birjand-Bunder Abbas triangle as our sphere of influence we must not abandon the whole of the rest of Persia to the Russian sphere. There will have to be a sphere open to general or common interests.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 348.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 636.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 20, 1906.

R. October 1, 1906.

At his weekly reception yesterday, M. Isvolsky told me that he had no further statements to make to me in regard to advances, loans, and spheres of influence in Persia, as the Emperor had postponed his return to Peterhof from his cruise, and he could add nothing to what he had already said until he had consulted with His Majesty. His Excellency added that he maintained his opinion that a delimitation of spheres of influence was the only method of solving the Persian question so far as Russia and England were concerned; and he intended to urge this solution on the Emperor and those of his colleagues who were interested in these matters. He asked me if I had telegraphed to you as to the advance and explained the matter as he had suggested. I replied in the affirmative, and said that I had laid before you his desire that (1) the Imperial and Russian Banks should permit a postponement of the repayment of the sums due to them by the Persian Government. (2) that we should content ourselves, as regards our share of the advance, with a lien on the Customs revenues in the south of Persia and the Persian Gulf, and (3) that we should make our part of the advance at once, the Russian Government, for certain reasons, being desirous of postponing the advance of their moiety.

His Excellency said that this was quite correct, and enquired if I had received any reply. I told him that there had been hardly time for me to do so, but that I had no doubt that I should receive one very shortly.

M. Isvolsky remarked that it was a fact that the Germans had received permission to establish a bank at Teheran, and that he believed that the German delegate would arrive shortly in the Persian capital.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 349.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 647.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 24, 1906.

R. October 1, 1906.

M. Isvolsky informed me yesterday that he had spoken with the Minister of Finance with respect to the sphere of interest which we required to the eastward of the line from Birjand to Bunder Abbas, and that His Excellency was in agreement with

him that our proposal was a perfectly acceptable one. He wished me to understand that he was speaking to me unofficially, and that what he expressed was merely the personal views of the Minister of Finance and himself. Both he and his colleague were of opinion that the main object of any arrangement to [*sic*] which the two Governments might arrive was to avoid any possibility of future collisions, and that in tracing spheres of influence this object should be kept in view. The sphere of influence which he was desirous to see adopted by the Russian Government would consequently be in the north of Persia, removed at some distance from the British sphere, and leaving the whole of the rest of Persia open to general enterprize. With this view the Minister of Finance quite agreed, so that there were two of them in the Cabinet ready to support what he considered to be a fair and reasonable arrangement. At the same time he must warn me that the General Staff might have different views, and that it might be considered that the proposed British sphere of interest might be not only of commercial but also of political and strategical importance. He further wished to tell me frankly that it was probable that when the spheres had been finally allotted, the Russian Government might find it desirable to construct railways in their zone, and for that purpose they would have to apply for neutral foreign capital. The recent war and the construction of the Siberian Railway had greatly diminished the funds which were available in Russia for such undertakings. They would seek for such capital in Belgium or Holland, but not in France: as they wished to apply to countries who were absolutely neutral in Persian affairs.

I thanked M. Isvolsky for the information which he had given me, and said that I trusted that he and the Minister of Finance would be able to overcome any objections which might be raised to the respective spheres of interest which he had indicated. It might be perfectly true that our proposed sphere was of political and strategical importance, but it should be remembered that the Russian sphere, as indicated by him, had also the same characteristics, and I must tell him with equal frankness that my Government considered that it was of primordial importance that our sphere of interest should be such as I had stated.

I added that it seemed to me that the discussions over these points would take some little time, but that I desired to see them terminated without undue delay. In the meantime I thought that it was desirable that we should arrange as to the two telegraph lines from Teheran to Meshed and from Meshed to Seistan. I had recently made him a very fair offer of an exchange, and information which had subsequently reached me rendered it, to my mind, advisable that we should deal with this question apart from the general arrangement. M. Isvolsky said that he really thought that the question of the two telegraph lines could be treated much more conveniently and naturally in connection with the whole arrangement, and that they were not such important matters, or of such urgency, as to demand separate and immediate consideration. He said, further, that there was also the question of Afghanistan to be considered, which stood in close relations with that of Persia. I said that I was well aware of this, and that I had received instructions to speak to him on this subject when the proper moment arrived.

M. Isvolsky said that the Emperor would probably not return to Peterhof till towards the end of this week; and that he must speak with His Majesty fully on the questions which he had mentioned to me.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

*Sir Edward Grey to King Edward.*Private.⁽¹⁾*Fallodon, September 24, 1906.*

Sir Edward Grey presents his humble duty to the King, and has had the honour to receive Your Majesty's telegram of the 22nd through Colonel Davidson.

It does not seem that the Russian Government is likely to make any definitive proposals respecting the Persian Gulf, and Sir Arthur Nicolson was originally instructed to refer home before committing H[is] M[ajesty's] Government to anything definitive on this point. Though, therefore, Sir Edward Grey is personally of opinion that access in some form to the inside of the Persian Gulf must eventually be a part of any agreement with Russia respecting Persia, the question of how this should be arranged is likely to remain in abeyance for the present.

On the other hand, it does seem to Sir Edward Grey to be urgent, in view of the present unrest in Persia, that there should be some understanding with Russia on the subject of Seistan and the part of Persia east of the line from Birgand to Bunder Abbas. The trouble, which has already arisen and about which the Indian Government has shown much concern, with regard to the Meshed-Seistan telegraph, is an instance of this.⁽²⁾ It can be avoided only in two ways:—1. By something equivalent to an occupation or Protectorate of Seistan and the south of Persia, or 2. By diplomatic arrangement. Of these alternatives the former would entail heavy expense and the constant burden of defending a new land frontier, and the second appears to Sir Edward Grey to be preferable. But in return for a diplomatic arrangement guaranteeing to us freedom from interference within this Seistan triangle, it would be necessary to give Russia an equal guarantee as regards some part of the North and West of Persia: and eventually, as part of any lasting arrangement, Russia must in some form share at any rate in commercial access to the Persian Gulf. If the mouth of the Gulf is retained in the British sphere of interest, such an arrangement could hardly be regarded as a serious menace to the security of India by sea, and meanwhile if Russia ceased to push her influence by telegraphs, roads, and other means in the Seistan triangle the security of India from any menace on land would be complete.

Sir Edward Grey proposes, therefore, if negotiations proceed, to ask from the Russian Government an agreement on their part to withdraw all influence whatever from the Seistan triangle as defined by the line from Birgand to Bunder Abbas, and to agree in return to recognize a similar sphere of interest for Russia in the North and West part of Persia, reserving the centre as common ground for commercial enterprise. If Russia raises the question of access to the Persian Gulf, Sir Edward Grey considers that this should not be negatived in principle, but become the subject of discussion.

The desire of the Indian Government, as contained in the telegram from the Viceroy of India, is to secure for ourselves a line from North of Birgand to Khanikin. Such a line could not, Sir Edward Grey feels sure, be obtained by diplomacy, and if it were to be adopted as the object of British policy, it would have to be secured by independent action and eventually by occupation of the whole of Southern Persia, a very serious addition to Imperial responsibilities.

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 64.]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 385-6, No. 335.]

No. 351.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 371/114.

(No. 265.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 25, 1906.

The German Chargé d'Affaires called on the 18th instant, and drew attention to a statement in the "Times" to the effect that a German Bank is to be established in Tehran. He said that, in order to avoid the possibility of any misunderstanding, he had been instructed to state the following facts:—

The Persian Government had recently offered a concession for a German bank in Tehran, and although nothing had so far been decided it was proposed to accept this concession, since German merchants wished to have such a Bank through which they could transact their commercial business. M. Tchirsky however, wished it to be understood that the acceptance of this suggestion indicated no change in German policy as regards Persia, where Germany had no political interests and only wished to develop her trade.

Sir C. Hardinge, who in my absence received Baron Stumm, asked if the concession was for a State Bank and said that if this were so it would be an infringement of the charter of the Bank of Persia, which had the monopoly of Government business and in which British capital was largely interested. He replied that he believed it to be a purely commercial bank like any ordinary English or foreign bank in London.

Sir C. Hardinge informed Baron Stumm that at Cronberg. M. Tchirsky had repeated to him more than once that Germany had no political interests whatever in Persia, her interests being purely commercial, and that he took note of the repetition of this statement, which he would not fail to report to me.

Sir C. Hardinge then said that a report had been current to the effect that German financiers were offering a loan to Persia and asked if this were so.⁽¹⁾ Baron Stumm replied that he had heard nothing of such a report and did not believe it to be true. Sir C. Hardinge added that the Persian Government had applied to us and to the Russians for a loan, and that the question of each country offering to advance a small sum was under consideration, but that if a German loan should be also in prospect there would necessarily be a conflict on the subject of the security to be offered, since the Customs receipts were the only security worth having in Persia, and the Northern Customs had already been hypothecated as security for a Russian loan and the Southern Customs for an English loan. Baron Stumm repeated his assertion that he had heard nothing of this rumour and disbelieved it.⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 382, No. 329, and p. 391, No. 345.]⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 401, No. 356.]

No. 352.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 662.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. September 29, 1906.

Sir,

R. October 15, 1906.

I called on M. Isvolsky this morning, and enquired of him, in the first place, whether he could give me a reply to the proposal which I had made that all details as to the mode in which the proceeds of the first moiety of the advance to the Persian Government should be applied,⁽¹⁾ should be settled by the two Representatives

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 393, No. 348.]

at Teheran, His Excellency said that he was consulting with the Minister of Finance on the subject, and that he would let me have a reply very shortly.

I then said that I wished to inform him that His Majesty's Government considered that it was desirable that the Russian Government should recognize at once a line from Birjand to Bunder Abbas as the western limit of a British sphere of influence. I pointed out that in co-operating with Russia in a joint advance to Persia, we desired to obtain a general settlement of the relations between Russia and Great Britain in that country, and that we should much prefer if the acceptance of our line should be adopted as a starting-point for common action.

M. Isvolsky said that he must repeat to me what he had stated on a former occasion that the question of spheres of influence should, in his opinion, not be associated with that of a simple advance. He dwelt at some length on the importance of spheres of influence, and the grave questions to which they gave rise, and that they were not matters which could be decided off-hand. He wished to understand clearly what I had said, and so he would ask me the direct question whether my Government wished to make their cooperation with Russia in an advance to the Persian Government conditional on the acceptance of the line from Birjand to Bunder Abbas. I replied that I would tell him frankly that my Government did formulate that condition, in any case with respect to the second moiety of the advance. His Excellency observed that in these circumstances he must explain to me fully and frankly how matters stood.

He had come to me, I would remember, as soon as he had received news from Terehan that the Persian Government were in urgent need of funds, and had given me full particulars as to the requests which had been made to the Russian Legation. He had done so in a loyal desire to act in harmony with the spirit of the tacit agreement which had been made between Count Lamsdorff and Sir C. Spring Rice,⁽²⁾ and also with the view of taking the first step towards common action in Persia which, he trusted, would lead later to a mutual agreement. It was then decided that the advance or at any rate, a portion of the advance, should be made conjointly. I had later communicated to him the desire of my Government to obtain as part of the guarantees for their portion of the advance a certain sphere to be under exclusive British influence. He had, at the same time, expressed to me his objections to associating so large a question as spheres of influence with so relatively small a matter as an advance.⁽³⁾ He had told me frankly his own personal views as to the line in question, which were of a favourable nature, but he had requested me to take them as simply his own personal views and not those of the Russian Government. He had hoped that the above considerations which I had doubtless communicated to my Government, would have shown that it was desirable not to make the larger question dependent on the lesser. I had, however, returned to the charge, and if my Government still maintained their standpoint the treatment of the negotiations would be rendered exceedingly difficult. He wished to be perfectly frank and loyal with me and he would speak without reserve. The question of spheres of influence in Persia was not a matter to be settled off-hand at twenty-four hours notice. It was an extremely delicate question requiring much thought and consideration. The sphere I had mentioned was a most important one, involving great political and strategical considerations, and though he was personally in favour of it, he would have to fight hard to procure its acceptance by others. That was one point to be taken into consideration. There were other points also which could not be left out of account.

We were engaged in negotiations of a very far reaching character, involving complex questions interdependent and connected with one another. They treated of matters which had engaged both countries for many years, and which had on more than one occasion brought the two countries into difficult crises. We both

(2) [*cp. supra*, pp. 378-9, No. 326, and *encl.*]

(3) [*cp. supra*, p. 392, No. 347, *note.*]

desired, if possible, to lay down the bases of an arrangement which would preclude all danger in the future of possible collisions and rivalry; and we also both wished to settle our mutual relations in regard to Thibet, Afghanistan and Persia, in such a manner, as would enable us to live in mutual amity and peace. I had explained to him at the outset of the negotiations that I did not wish for three separate conventions, but for one convention covering all the three great questions, and in fact that we both should follow the same procedure as had been adopted in the negotiations leading to the Anglo-French agreement. He thought that this was a good method of procedure, as one country could make concessions on one question, and the other country yield a little on another. This was in the proper spirit of a negotiation. But His Majesty's Government now wished apparently to settle one part, and an important part, of one question before an agreement had been reached on other questions, and the reason which was given for this procedure was based on what he could but consider insufficient grounds viz., a relatively small advance of a few million francs to Persia.

He sincerely trusted that the negotiations would not be "rushed," and that he should be allowed time to clear away the obstacles which lay in the path of a successful issue. If His Majesty's Government continued to insist on the condition which I had mentioned as to the second moiety of the advance, the Russian Government would have, if the exigencies of the Persian Treasury required it, to make that portion of the advance out of their own resources. It might be inconvenient, but they would be able to find the £200,000. He trusted that I would lay all these considerations before you, and see if you would not be disposed to reconsider your decision.

I told M. Isvolsky that of course I would faithfully repeat to you all that he had said. At the same time I would wish to point out to him that the sphere which I had been authorized to propose might be strategically important, but only to us from a defensive point of view. Russia would probably, as I had understood him, seek for a similar zone somewhere in the north, which also would possibly have strategical importance. But our views, as his, were to make for peace and so to arrange matters as would separate and remove all chances of collision. I understood that our respective zones were not to be contiguous: it was better to my mind that they should not be; and I thought that a recognition of our line would not have all the consequences which he had foreshadowed. Still I said that I had perfect confidence in his loyalty, and I did not wish to undervalue the considerations he had put forth. Although I considered and I did not doubt that I reflected your opinion, that the treatment of the three large questions, Thibet, Afghanistan and Persia, must be taken as a whole, it would be necessary to arrive at a clear understanding on each question before drawing up the final convention. We had practically done so on Thibet, and we could equally do so as to Persia. I did not doubt that his task would be a difficult one, but at the same time protracted delay was undesirable as third parties had, as he said, watchful eyes, and might intervene.

I had intercalated in our conversation the question of the Meshed-Seistan line, but for sake of lucidity I reserve this for another despatch.

My own impression is that M. Isvolsky is perfectly sincere, and that he in no wise is raising unnecessary or imaginary difficulties. I am afraid that if we continue to insist on a preliminary and immediate recognition of the Birjand-Bunder-Abbas line, we may frighten him off the whole question. Underlying much of what he said to me is I think, a suspicion that we may be trying to take advantage of the financial and internal difficulties of Russia to force her hand. It is for the ultimate success of our negotiations desirable to remove this suspicion, and, if I may venture to say so, I think it would be prudent to take the advance to Persia as a first step towards joint action, without insisting on other conditions which M. Isvolsky may at present feel it impossible to accord.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

The Russians always move slowly and do not like being "rushed."

C. H.

But they sometimes like "rushing" e.g. the Seistan telegraph. If M. Isvolsky would put that right I should have no fault to find with his attitude.

E. G.

No. 353.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/110.

(No. 663.)

St. Petersburg, D. September 29, 1906.

Sir,

R. October 15, 1906.

I told M. Isvolsky this morning that I wished to speak to him seriously on a question, which, I feared, unless promptly settled might become a troublesome one. I alluded I said, to the Meshed-Seistan line⁽¹⁾; and I observed that since I had last spoken to him on the subject, further steps had been taken and that now the Seistan end of the line had been brought into the Russian office at Nasretabad which was a separate room, whence connection was led into the Persian office. This therefore gave control over that end of the line as well as over the terminal line at Meshed to the Russian authorities. This was a condition of affairs which was extremely unfortunate. I said that I had proposed to him a very fair and reasonable compromise, to be effected by an exchange of our supervision over the Teheran-Meshed line for the Russian control over the Meshed Seistan line. The Teheran-Meshed line might be of use to the Russian authorities, while the other line was of little value to them, and as matters at present stood, there would be constant causes for trouble and inconvenience. I was, therefore, instructed to repeat my above mentioned proposal and to express the hope that it would be immediately carried into effect, and before we discussed further the question of making a joint payment of the second moiety of the advance to the Persian Government.

M. Isvolsky repeated to me the arguments which he had used on the former occasion, and said that he would be prepared to study my proposal, but he feared that the transfer of the two lines would make a noise ("retentissement") throughout Persia, and awake the curiosity of other parties. Was it wise for us, he asked, to disclose prematurely to the watchful eyes of third parties any portion of our cards? Should we before we had advanced very far in our general negotiations afford to others an insight into the aims of our discussions? He thought we should be very careful in this respect. I said that I did not see why more "retentissement" should be caused by the step I had suggested than by the fact of our making a joint advance. His Excellency observed that the Persian Government might be alarmed at so striking an evidence of our cooperation, and I replied that I did not think that this would be a disadvantage. M. Isvolsky said that it might induce the Persian Government to turn to a third party; but with this view I did not agree, or attribute great importance to it. His Excellency said that Germany had no political interests in Persia, and was unable to make her presence felt there in the way that Russia and England could; and in these circumstances Persia might regard her as an disinterested friend to whom she could apply for advice and assistance. He did not wish to hasten this possible intimacy before our general arrangement was concluded. I maintained that it was of importance that all causes of friction between us should be removed, and I foresaw possibilities in the near future of trouble and annoyance if the Russian

(1) [*cp. supra*, pp. 385-6, No. 335, and *note*.]

authorities retained their hold over the Seistan line. His Excellency said he would examine the question, though he confessed he did not see the urgent importance of it.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Of course M. Isvolsky does not feel the urgency of it because it is the Indian Gov[ernmen]t and not his own that has been annoyed by the change.

The fact is that the military and some of the official party in Russia are opposed to the suggested agreement about Persia; on our side the Indian Gov[ernmen]t is equally opposed to it. But our country not being in a state of revolution and our Government being properly organized we can overrule the opposition on our side: M. Isvolsky cannot tackle the opposition on his; hence the difficulty of the situation.

E. G.

No. 354.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 664.)

St. Petersburg, D. September 29, 1906.

Sir,

R. October 15, 1906.

I mentioned to M. Isvolsky that I thought that it would be most desirable, and I was also repeating the opinion of my Government, that during our negotiations a truce should be declared in regard to the rivalry of our respective agents in the Persian provinces. I said that it was natural that those in the distant districts of Persia who had inherited the traditions of rivalry should continue the course which their predecessors had followed, but I trusted that he would issue instructions, which would lead his officials to lay down their arms.

M. Isvolsky said that he entirely agreed with the above views, and that he had already issued instructions to that effect, but that he would repeat them in a positive form. He added that he had already removed from the Russian Legation an official whose influence he considered was injurious.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 355.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/169.

(No. 144.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 1, 1906.

The Persian Minister asked me to-day, by instruction from his Government, whether it was true that an Agreement had been come to between ourselves and the Russian Government on Asiatic Questions, and containing a clause respecting Persia.

I said that no such Agreement had been come to.

In reply to further questions as to whether such an Agreement was imminent or was under discussion, I said that owing to the present state of Persia we did discuss matters with the Russian Government concerning telegraphs, loans, and other emergencies. It was inevitable that we should do so, in order to prevent differences from arising between us. But we had not discussed anything which in any way would prejudice the independence or the integrity of Persia.

I am, &c.

EDWARD GREY.

(¹) [Also to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 447, October 3, 1906.]

No. 356.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 371/114.

(No. 271.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 2, 1906.

With reference to my despatch No. 265 of the 25th ult[imo],⁽¹⁾ I have to inform Y[our] E[xcellency] that the German Chargé d'Affaires called on the 24th ult[imo] and, under instructions from his Gov[ernmen]t, informed Sir C. Hardinge, who in my absence received him, that owing to the lack of interest shown in the proposal by German financiers, it was not unlikely that the project of a German bank in Tehran would never be realised, but that in any case, if it should be realised, it would be a purely private bank, and in no sense a State bank.

With reference to Sir C. Hardinge's enquiry as to a rumoured German loan to Persia, he was instructed to say that the German Gov[ernmen]t had no knowledge of any such proposal being discussed in German private financial circles, and that they themselves would refrain from entering into any question of a loan to Persia.

Sir C. Hardinge took notes of Baron Stumm's statement, which he read to him, thanking him for the communication which he had been instructed to make.

I am, &c.

EDWARD GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 396, No. 351.]

No. 357.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

October 3, 1906.

I am not anxious to hurry matters about Persia now. We have shown enough of our hand to convince the Russians that a fair agreement with us is a practicable policy.

We may now wait for them to produce to us the proposals, which M. Isvolsky says he has prepared though he cannot disclose them yet. I am not inclined for a big joint loan to Persia after the present advance of £400,000; we cannot finance Persia for ever. And this advance to enable a new Shah to make a fair start might be a reasonable thing, but I do not like lending money to a country, which is going down-hill and getting deeper and deeper into debt. It means that some day we shall have to realize our securities by force and undertake new responsibilities. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]⁽²⁾ [The remainder of this letter deals with other matters.]

No. 358.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 257.)

Sir,

*Tehran, D. October 7, 1906.**R. October 29, 1906.*

I have the honour to report that on the 3rd instant I called on the Ala-saltaneh, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. His Highness, who, as you are aware, has been for 15 years Persian Minister in London, received me with great cordiality. I submit a brief résumé of a long conversation.

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His Highness said that he was most unwilling to leave London and that he had only yielded to the pressure exercised on him by the Shah and the Grand Vizier. The appointment was not pleasing to the Russians : but he had pointed out that the Grand Vizier's son was Minister in St. Petersburg, and was regarded as a decided pro-Russian : so that his supposed English sympathies would, if they existed, be counteracted.

He expressed great anxiety as to the *pourparlers* said to be going on between England and Russia. For years England had been the natural and necessary friend of Persia. Was she going to abandon her ancient ally to her new friend? I reminded him of the explicit assurances made both by Lord Lansdowne and yourself,⁽¹⁾ to him personally, and asked him if, in view of these assurances, he could believe that England had changed her views as to the necessity of maintaining the integrity and independence of Persia.

He said he had himself no doubts : but there was undoubtedly a feeling of doubt in the air and especially in the Shah's mind. It was feared that England, in order to arrive at a friendly arrangement with Russia, might consent to a general surrender of her interest in Persia, or what would be even worse, would negotiate a partition of the empire, into so-called spheres of interest, which was a convenient term for a veiled protectorate. Was England contemplating a Persian agreement with Russia on the model of the Moroccan agreement with France? If so Persia would seek her salvation elsewhere than in the advice of England, and would throw herself on Europe. Or was she contemplating a division of Persia, on the model of the African settlements? In that case Persia would claim the right of a voice in deciding her own fate, and would appeal to the sympathies of the world at large.

Another matter which had deeply impressed the Shah was the apparent apathy of England and Russia in the matter of the Frontier agreement with Turkey. So extreme had now become the violence of the Turkish attitude that it was plain that the Persian Government would be obliged to have recourse to arbitration. He himself would prefer that of Sir Nicholas O'Connor : he thought, however, that some independent sovereign would be appealed to, and I understand from other quarters, that the sovereign in view is the Emperor William.

A third and most serious consideration was suggested by the joint loan of which he had recently been informed. Did it mean, as some said, that Russia had been obliged, owing to her financial necessities, to give up her former design (prosecuted up to the last moment, and defeated mainly owing to the opportune offer of certain English capitalists) of obtaining extortionate terms for a large advance, and had been compelled to have recourse to England? And had England submitted to the Russian conditions, and consented to join hands with the Russian Government in coercing the Persian Government? He reminded me of the great objection of the Amin-es-Sultan to Lord Salisbury's former proposal of a joint loan, on the ground that it would be the first step to a joint protectorate, and said that it could not be wondered at if the news had aroused the gravest apprehensions.

I reassured His Highness as well as I could, pointing out the unequivocal nature of your declarations, and my conviction that the first principle of English policy in Persia was the maintenance of her independence in the fullest sense of the word.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 377, No. 323.]

No. 359.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 258.)

Sir,

Tehran, D. October 7, 1906.

R. October 29, 1906.

I called on the 5th instant on the Russian Minister who is still in his country residence. He received me with the greatest cordiality.

We discussed the situation in general terms. As you are aware, when in Russia, he was an advocate of the agreement with England, mainly on European grounds. I did not gather from his conversation that his views had changed; but he has undoubtedly, whatever are his intentions, found the traditions of his office, and the sympathies of his subordinates a considerable obstacle to carrying out the policy of conciliation which is so much to be desired.

With regard to the joint loan he said he would immediately take the matter in hand. I am in consultation with Mr. Rabino of the Imperial Bank, and my colleague and I will draw up and submit a scheme for the reasonable control of expenditure, on the lines already agreed on. The necessities of the Government are such that there will not be much difficulty in proving to our satisfaction, that the money demanded is really required. I will bear in mind the necessity of an accurate definition of our guarantee, in view of the doubts which have arisen with regard to the Gulf Ports. I trust that no difficulty will arise in this connection: but if it does, I fear we shall have to insist on a satisfactory settlement.

Monsieur Hartwig spoke of the question of spheres of interest. He said that the great objection to this proposal was that if it came to be known to the Persians, it would infallibly throw them into the arms of Germany, while it would be an endless cause of difficulty between the Governments of England and Russia. The best course to take, in his opinion, was a specific Convention dealing with railways, telegraphs, &c. To this the Persian Government could not object, and it would leave no opening for disputes as to what was or was not an infraction of this shadowy expression "influence."

I told him that I had despatched the telegram, copy of which I enclose,⁽¹⁾ to His Majesty's Consular officers in Persia, recommending them to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards their Russian colleagues, and he said he would send similar instructions. The cordial co-operation between our Consular officers, was, he said, especially necessary at Tabriz, where the Valiahd's attitude was of so much importance.

We did not enter specifically into any of the questions now pending between our Governments in this country. We parted on the most friendly terms and with mutual assurances of the desire to facilitate the task of our Governments by the personal relations of ourselves and of our respective subordinates.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 360.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 264.)

Sir,

Tehran, D. October 11, 1906.

R. October 29, 1906.

It is, of course, too early for me to give any opinion on the general situation. I venture, however, to submit the following observations.

Whatever be the immediate practical effect of the new popular institution, there appears to be little doubt that it is the outward sign of a considerable change through

which Persia is passing. From all I hear I gather that the spirit of patriotism has come to life and may be come to stay. This is the natural result of the educational work of the Babis, the Pan-Islamic movement, and the feeling of personal dignity which has been revived in the Asiatic mind by the successes of Japan. Whatever may be the strength and practical value of the movement, I venture to submit that it should not be lost sight of.

From this point of view it would appear that in any negotiations with regard to this country which we carry on with Russia, we should put on record, as the first and principal point of our policy, our traditional desire to obtain, in a definite and final shape, the formal recognition of the principle of Persian integrity and independence, and the maintenance throughout Persia of equal opportunity for the commerce of all nations. I submit that our hands would be greatly strengthened in dealing with this Government should we be able to point to indisputable evidence that this was our first and foremost demand, in negotiating with Russia for the final settlement of our differences.

Should we desire to effect a settlement of those differences by a mutual agreement to restrict our diplomatic activities to certain respective portions of the Persian Empire, I submit that such an agreement should be of a specific and definite character, relative to the prosecution under English and Russian influence respectively of certain industrial enterprises, the definition of the measures against the infiltration of plague and other details of a commercial or administrative character, but that all proposals liable to be misinterpreted as a demand for exclusive territorial control should be sedulously avoided.

I fear that an English proposal, of a territorial character, would be a valuable instrument in the hands of any one anxious to prove to the Persian people that the policy of Great Britain, which has so long and so ably striven to maintain the principle of Persian integrity and independence, had now changed: and that we were striving to buy off the hostility of Russia by surrendering to her exclusive control over the greater part of Persia, on condition that we were permitted to hold as our exclusive possession that small remaining portion which we considered necessary for the defence of our Indian possessions.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

No. 361.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

Tehran, October 12, 1906.

I have had many conversations with Mullahs Ministers and private individuals. I gather that it is generally believed that we encouraged the congress movement in order to dish the Russians and that we have been successful. Of course I have stated over and over again that we had no such intention—that the Persians owe their liberties to themselves and not to us—that if the popular party lean on one foreign nation the reactionaries will lean on another; and that Persian independence will inevitably suffer from the consequences of foreign interference. One prominent preacher appeared to understand the danger and I think I convinced him that the best course our Legation could follow was to abstain from all interference on condition, and on the understanding that Russia also would abstain. The general impression left by my remarks I gather to be a disappointment. People here cannot conceive of England as being anything else but opposed to Russia and

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 31.]

they believe that if we make an agreement with Russia about Persian affairs it will be of the nature of a bargain: England ceding part of Persia to Russia in exchange for another part: or England ceding the whole of Persia in exchange for a consideration elsewhere. They cannot conceive the two countries giving up their secular rivalry and agreeing to live together amicably. This is why I think it would be desirable to have it on record, to produce if necessary, that our first step in making the negotiations was to ask for a formal confirmation of the old assurances as to the independence and integrity of Persia.

I have instructed consuls to adopt a friendly attitude to their Russian colleagues and have given Hartwig a copy of the telegram. He tells me he has done the same. I regret to say that the accounts which reach me do not show any evidence of a change for the better and Hartwig's long silence about the loan is significant. The Persians very strongly object to a joint loan and so do the Russians. Grube, our chief enemy, is now in St. Petersburg and he always openly maintained that he was opposed to an understanding with us in Persia. He is clever and convincing and very probably has seen the Emperor. At least this is what I have been told here⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,
CECIL SPRING-RICE.

⁽²⁾ [The omitted parts of this long letter describe the general situation in Persia.]

No. 362.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Tehran, October 13, 1906.

F.O. 371/169.

D. 10.50 A.M.

Tel. (No. 282.)

R. 2.10 P.M.

In conversation with Russian Minister we agreed that it would be to the joint advantage of both countries here if some public statement were made to the effect that first object of our negotiations was to strengthen and confirm the principle of independence and integrity of Persia which we had both always advocated.

I have made communication to Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] in the sense of your telegram No. 172.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This is the same in substance as despatch No. 144, *v. supra*, p. 400, No. 355.]

No. 363.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 694.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 15, 1906.

Sir,

R. October 29, 1906.

The French Minister, M. Boutiron, enquired of me the day before yesterday whether my discussions with M. Isvolsky were making any progress. I told him, in confidence, that the two Governments would shortly make a small advance in common to relieve the most pressing necessities of the Persian Government and that M. Isvolsky and myself were still engaged in discussing the broad outlines of a future agreement. I did not go into any details with M. Boutiron, nor give him

any indication of the points which were at present under treatment, but I said that I anticipated that, later on, the military party would place considerable difficulties in the way of a satisfactory arrangement. I added that I was sure that M. Isvolsky would do his best to overcome any such difficulties, but that I was unaware whether his influence and position were sufficiently strong to enable him to meet with success. In any case, I expected that the negotiations would be protracted. . . .⁽¹⁾

M. Boutiron went on to say that M. Hartwig had been imbued with the old traditions prevalent at the Ministry here, and that his views on the Persian question were probably divergent from those held by his Chief, and that possibly with his greater knowledge of the details of the questions, he might exercise an influence on Monsieur Isvolsky which would hamper a smooth course of the negotiations. He asked me if I had observed any "German tendencies" on the part of M. Isvolsky. I replied that, hitherto, I had not, but it would be foolish to imagine that Germany would view with complete satisfaction the conclusion of a durable understanding between England and Russia.

M. Boutiron said that, before returning to St. Petersburg, M. Isvolsky would pay a visit to Paris, where he would see the President and Monsieur Bourgeois and that he would naturally make a halt at Berlin where probably he would have an audience of the Emperor, to whom he was a *persona gratissima*, and also see Prince Bülow. I remarked that it would be of interest to observe what impression these visits would leave on the mind of M. Isvolsky when he returned here.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

M. Hartwig's views on the Persian question are said to differ widely from those of M. Isvolsky. This may explain the divergent information we receive from St. Petersburg and Teheran.

E. G[ORST].

C. H.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [The omitted paragraph refers further to the French Minister at Tehran, but gives no new information.]

No. 364.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 701.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 19, 1906.

R. October 29, 1906.

I enquired of M. Goubastoff this afternoon whether he had received from the Russian Minister at Teheran any suggestion that some statement should be published to the effect that the object of our negotiations with regard to Persia was chiefly to strengthen the independence and integrity of that country. His Excellency replied that he had received no information in regard to such a proposal, and seemed a little puzzled as to the drift of my enquiry. I explained to him what had been reported by Sir C. Spring Rice as the result of a conversation which he had held with M. Hartwig on the subject,⁽¹⁾ and I thought that the latter might have mentioned the matter to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

I said that my Government had made no comments on the communication from His Majesty's Minister, so that I was unaware what were your views, but apart from local considerations to which undoubtedly weight should be given, it seemed

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 405, No. 362.]

to me as a matter of personal opinion, that the less public reference that was made to our negotiations the better it would be. I understood that both His Majesty's Government and the Russian Government had given assurances in the sense desired to the Persian Government, and I thought that there the matter might be allowed to rest. At the present stage of our negotiations it was, to my mind, undesirable to draw public attention to them; but I should be glad to hear his views on the question.

M. Goubastoff said that he agreed with me that as little publicity as possible should be given to our negotiations, though if the Persian Government desired to reassure the public they might be permitted to make the statement, in the manner they considered to be the most appropriate.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 365.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Tehran, October 23, 1906.

F.O. 371/170.

D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 300.)

R. 7.45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 187 and Sir A. Nicolson's No. 270.⁽¹⁾

I have shown translation of your despatch No. 144⁽²⁾ to Minister for Foreign Affairs, who said he would at once show it to Shah, who had been assured by the Russian Legation that Russia was defending the principle of Persian integrity against proposals of His Majesty's Government. This probably refers to our proposal for a "sphere of influence."

The Shah's surroundings are all anti-English, and a frank and open statement is the best corrective.

⁽¹⁾ [Tel. No. 270 from Sir A. Nicolson of October 19, 1906, reports a conversation with the Russian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs with reference to the desirability of a public statement being made in Persia as to the Anglo-Russian negotiations. Sir A. Nicolson had said he thought at that stage "the less said publicly, the better." In Tel. No. 412 to Sir A. Nicolson (repeated as No. 187 to Sir C. Spring-Rice) Sir E. Grey approved the language, adding "but as so much has appeared in the Press I shall be asked questions in Parliament and shall have to refer to the integrity of Persia as being one object of the joint advance."]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 400, No. 355.]

No. 366.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/170.

Foreign Office, October 31, 1906.

Tel. (No. 431.)

D. 4.5 P.M.

It is desirable that M. Isvolsky should feel that we expect to make progress with Persian negotiations after his return from Berlin. It will be well to make our line include Kerman if possible. It would be better to avoid use of the term spheres of influence. The first point should be agreement between ourselves and Russia that neither of us will seek or maintain influence in the districts, which border upon the territory of the other. These districts we will define with each other. We can then get from the Persian Gov[ernmen]t an assurance not to allow either district to be disturbed by admitting another Power to interests in it.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 735.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 4, 1906.

R. November 12, 1906.

I called on M. Isvolsky yesterday afternoon, and stated to him that now that he had returned to St. Petersburg I trusted that our negotiations would proceed with reasonable despatch. I told His Excellency that the details of an immediate advance of money to the Persian Government were practically settled, and that we were now at liberty to deal with the wider question of our future relations in Persia. During his absence from St. Petersburg I had been in communication with you on the subject, and that you were of opinion that progress should be made in the discussions. It seemed to me that there were no serious obstacles in the way of a fairly speedy settlement, and, indeed, owing to certain indiscretions which had given the public press occasion to comment on our negotiations it was desirable that we should come to terms with as little delay as possible.

M. Isvolsky replied that he need not repeat to me that he was sincerely desirous of arriving at a final arrangement, but that he must be allowed time to overcome the opposition which existed in certain quarters not perhaps so much against the principle of a friendly understanding with Great Britain, as against the basis on which we proposed to found an agreement. He was personally quite in accord with our views (*je suis parfaitement dans votre ordre d'idées*), but the proposal to delimit spheres of influence was by several important authorities regarded with much hesitation and doubt. For instance the general staff, with whom he had not yet discussed the matter seriously, were, he gathered, indisposed to abandon Seistan absolutely to our influence and control. To the Military mind those districts were of great strategical importance, and might in the future be of great value. He would then have to be armed with strong arguments to overcome their opposition, and to remove their objections, and he would have to be able to prove to the military Authorities that compensatory advantages would be acquired elsewhere. Then again there was a great mass of public opinion to be converted and be brought over to the new direction which would be given to Russian Foreign Policy. In view of these considerations it was evident that some time must elapse before we could approach the end of our negotiations.

I told M. Isvolsky that the military mind only saw one side of the question, and that opposition to an arrangement from military quarters was to be expected perhaps not exclusively in Russia. He should not imagine that there was a consensus of opinion among all the Authorities who had been consulted on our side; but the responsible directors of the negotiations did not give undue weight to the Military point of view.

I intend to go into this portion of the question more fully on another occasion, as I wished yesterday to lead the conversation on to other grounds. In connection with the Military point of view, I would beg leave to call your attention to the enclosed letter from Colonel Napier whom I had desired to sound the Chief of the General Staff on the subject of an Anglo-Russian understanding.

I further told M. Isvolsky that so far as I was able to ascertain, public opinion in Russia was, generally speaking, in favour of an arrangement with Great Britain, and journals so wide apart in politics as the "*Novoe Vremya*" and the "*Oko*" were singing pæans in praise of an agreement.

His Excellency said that it was possible that a portion of the press were well disposed, but he cited one or two papers who were opposed to an abandonment of the secular policy of Russia. There was, he added, another point which somewhat perplexed him. He presumed that our Convention, when signed, would be published, and he was puzzled how a preamble would be composed which would satisfy the

⁽¹⁾ [Summarized in Tel. No. 287 of November 3, 1906.]

Persian Government and other Countries that we were not proceeding to a division of Persia, and were not departing from the principle of the "open door."

I observed to M. Isvolsky that I did not consider that the drafting of a suitable preamble would be a matter of great difficulty. We could place at the beginning a phrase testifying our mutual desire to maintain the integrity and independence of Persia, and we could then proceed to mention that in view of our respective geographical frontiers marching with those of Persia, it was desirable, in the interests of peace and good order, that neither Great Britain nor Russia should seek or maintain influence in the districts which bordered on the frontier of the other. We could define those districts in the course of our negotiations. We had indeed already specified the districts which we considered essential to the security of our frontiers, and I understood from him that what I might term the Russian district would lie in the North of Persia. The two districts would, I trusted, not be contiguous, but that there would be an intervening space between them. To my mind that was a most desirable condition. We could then obtain from the Persian Government an engagement not to allow either district to be disturbed by admitting another Power to interests in it. No Power could possibly take exception to such an arrangement, as our rights to secure our frontiers from disturbances or interference were incontestable. It would, I said, be well not to mention "spheres of influence or interest." I had not, I added, a ready drawn formula to submit to him, but what I mentioned was the general outline, and I knew that it was in accordance with your views.

M. Isvolsky remarked that as we wished to exclude the grant of concessions to other Powers in our districts, some of the latter, Germany for instance, might contend that we were not upholding the principle of the "open door."

I replied that I could not agree with that view. It was quite true that we should not admit that other Powers should seek for concessions in our district, and he knew well that concessions for railways and other enterprises in countries such as Persia carried more with them than appeared on the surface. But I did not think that it was desired to shut the door to legitimate commerce, and in any case throughout the whole of the rest of Persia the door would be sufficiently wide open to any concessions and trade which other Powers might wish to promote. He had mentioned Germany; was I to understand that that Power had raised any objections to our arriving at an understanding between ourselves?

M. Isvolsky said that he had carefully abstained from allowing Germany to have any insight into the nature of our negotiations, as he considered that these were matters which concerned us alone. Although Germany had shown no disposition to place spokes in our wheel (*de mettre des bâtons dans nos roues*), it was evident that she had no interest in seeing us arrive at an understanding (*elle n'avait pas d'intérêt de nous voir arriver à une entente*). I would naturally recollect what had occurred in the matter of the Anglo-French Agreement in respect of Morocco, and the difficulties in which M. Delcassé had been placed by not having previously or opportunely acquainted the German Government with what had been arranged. Moreover, I had not made it clear to him how the Persian Government would be induced to view with complacency the arrangement which I had sketched. Supposing they were to regard it as a partition, in a disguised form, of their country, and were to turn to Germany to intervene in the matter? I was not to suppose from these observations that he was raising unnecessarily imaginary difficulties to an arrangement. He was wholly and sincerely in favour of our coming to an understanding, but he wished to lay before me the different aspects of the case, especially as it would present itself to other parties, and to show me that the question was not one which could be solved easily or speedily.

I did not think it prudent at our first meeting after his return to go more fully into the attitude and views of Germany, as he may still be under the influence of his recent visit to Berlin, and disinclined to be probed on the matter. I will obtain another opportunity before this messenger leaves of questioning him more closely on the subject, and I did not desire to give him the impression that I was

either anxious or distrustful as to what had passed at his interview at the German Capital.

Before leaving the question of Persia I put to him the direct question as to whether the Emperor was still in favour of an understanding with Great Britain, M. Isvolsky replied that undoubtedly His Majesty was still of the same mind, but that when the question, for instance, of a delimitation of our respective spheres in Persia came before His Majesty, he would naturally consult with his military advisers as well as with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. Isvolsky added that he wished to be in such a position on that occasion as to be able to show His Majesty that the weight of argument did not lie on the side of the military.

The impressions which my conversation with M. Isvolsky left on my mind are that, though personally desirous of coming to an arrangement, he is disposed to proceed with extreme and deliberate caution, and to make such slow progress as would unduly prolong the negotiations and permit the introduction of elements which might be of a disturbing character. It will, I think, be necessary to stimulate M. Isvolsky to proceed more rapidly, and I would suggest that it would be of advantage if I could be furnished with the draft of an article which would serve as a preamble to our agreement in regard to Persia, and which would be drawn on the lines which I hastily sketched to M. Isvolsky. I think that if he were placed in possession of such a draft some of his hesitations would be removed, and he would see that our proposals were not so difficult to frame as he at present appears to imagine. We could in this article or articles lay down our mutual desire not to disturb the political status of Persia, and also specify the districts in which, in view of the propinquity to the Afghan and Belooch frontiers, we are anxious to maintain peace and order and in which we could not admit the interference of other Powers. We should be obliged to leave in blank the districts in which Russia has a similar interest, but this lacuna would afford a good reason for urging the Russian Government to supply the omissions. I also believe that M. Isvolsky, had he this document in hand, would be in a better position to discuss matters with the Emperor and with his colleagues.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 367.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Sir A. Nicolson.

Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, November 3, 1906.

I have the honour to report that, in accordance with Your Excellency's desire that I should endeavour to ascertain what are the views of the Military Party on the question of an agreement about Persia, I took the opportunity yesterday, when paying my respects to General Palitzin on my return to duty after a prolonged absence, of sounding him on the subject.

General Palitzin, Chief of the General Staff, is at present, with exception of the Grand Duke Nicolas, the most influential officer at Head-Quarters; he received me with great cordiality, and conversed on a variety of topics, so that I was able to introduce the subject of Persia without raising any suspicion of that being the special object of my visit.

General Palitzin expressed himself, I believe sincerely, in favour of friendship with England, and declared that all through Asia we had a great many interests in common, but that the mutual distrust and misunderstandings which had lasted so long could not be put aside in a moment, and made an agreement very difficult. As regards Persia, he did not believe in, and was opposed to, spheres of influence. In his opinion it was not a practical policy. The trade of Persia was a matter of real importance, and it was impossible to set limits to its operations which were governed by the laws of supply and demand, geographical considerations, means of transport, &c., which enabled one or other country to push its trade in various directions at the expense of its rivals. Of course it was possible to divide up Persia,

but if Russia and England each took spheres of influence, Germany and other countries would also demand their share, and then we should have to conquer Persia.

General Palitzin did not look with favour on the prospect of the Bagdad railway with a branch to Khanikin, but thought the prospect was remote, and meanwhile he was not an advocate for prolonging the Russian railway from Erivan towards Terehan. He avoided giving any strategical reasons for his objection to spheres of influence, and I could not press him on that point without putting forward the actual proposals of our Government and betraying my purpose, which Your Excellency wished me to avoid.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

MINUTE.

If the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, at the instigation of the Military party, refuse to recognise our proposed sphere of influence, the obvious conclusion is they have aggressive intentions against India for which they want Seistan as a base. In that case further negotiations would be useless.

In the preamble to be d[ra]fted it might be distinctly stated that the door will be open in the spheres of influence to the trade of all countries and the concessions to be reserved might be limited to roads, railways, telegraphs, harbours and irrigation.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 368.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 738.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 5, 1906.

R. November 12, 1906.

I called on the German Ambassador to-day, who conversed with me as to the visit of M. Isvolsky to Berlin, where the latter had created a most favourable impression, and had been, he thought, gratified by the cordial reception which had been accorded to him. M. de Schoen said that M. Isvolsky had appeared anxious to ascertain the views of the German Government in regard to the negotiations between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia in respect to Persia, and he trusted that any uneasiness which His Excellency might have felt with regard to the attitude of Germany had been dispelled.

Germany, M. de Schoen continued, had no desire to place any obstacles in the way of an understanding between Great Britain and Russia, and had no wish to secure any concessions for herself in Persia either as to banks or railways. All that she desired was that the principle of the open door should be upheld as regards trade. No German Bank appeared to be desirous of establishing an institution in Persia, where the Imperial Bank already occupied the ground. There had been some absurd talk in the papers of Germany establishing schools, and even a University at Teheran. Nothing could be farther from the fact; all that had been done was to open a German school for little German girls. He understood from M. Isvolsky that our negotiations were likely to last for some time, as there was considerable opposition to be overcome in certain quarters in Russia, and that after having terminated our discussions as to Persia, we should then deal with Afghanistan and Thibet in regard to which he presumed there would be no difficulty.

I told M. de Schoen that our negotiations in regard to Persia had for their main object the removal of all possible causes of friction between the two countries; that the principle of the open door was a cherished one in my country; and that it was possible that our negotiations would proceed slowly as it would take time to create a fresh departure from the traditional policy which had hitherto been pursued, and

which was only of advantage to the politicians of Persia who delighted in playing one country off against the other.

M. de Schoen voluntarily touched the subject of our negotiations, and I will communicate to M. Isvolsky the substance of our conversation at my next interview with him. I reported the outline of the above conversation in my telegram No. 289 of to-day's date.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced as its tenour is indicated.]

No. 369.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 745.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 7, 1906.

R. November 12, 1906.

I took an opportunity at the weekly reception of M. Isvolsky to-day to give him the substance of the remarks which the German Ambassador made to me a day or two ago on the subject of the attitude of the German Government towards the negotiations between Russia and Great Britain in regard to Persia, and which I had the honour to report to you in my despatch No. 738 Confidential of the 5th instant.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky said he was gratified to receive the information which I had given him, and was pleased with the reply which I had made to my German Colleague, as it was conceived in the sense of the language which he had himself held at Berlin.

M. Isvolsky said that he had, he confessed, always been a little uneasy as to the attitude of Germany, and was afraid that she would suddenly appear as a *Deus ex machina*, and place obstructions at Teheran in the way of our negotiations. He had, therefore, determined to broach the subject himself at Berlin, and ascertain directly what views were held by the German Government. He had told Prince Bülow that the negotiations which he was conducting in St. Petersburg were not conceived in any hostile sense towards Germany, but had simply for object the removal of all causes of friction between the two Countries in Central Asia, and the establishment of more amicable relations between Great Britain and Russia. He had carefully abstained, and he particularly begged me to inform you of this, from giving Prince Bülow any insight into the nature of our negotiations or into the tenour of the proposals which we had respectively made to each other. It would be undignified on our part to acquaint a third Power with the details of our discussions, and he should certainly decline either to take any one into our confidence, or to submit any conclusions to [*sic*] which we might arrive to the approval of another party. Our negotiations were matters which concerned us alone.

His Excellency said that he had told Prince Bülow further that he, for his part, would always be careful to avoid taking any step which could injure the legitimate interests of Germany, or indeed of any Power, and had added that to enable him to guide his course it would be desirable if the German Government would indicate what interests they had in Persia, which they would desire to preserve intact.

Prince Bülow had replied that the only interests with which Germany was concerned were the Bagdad Railway, and an open door for her commerce.

M. Isvolsky said that this statement, corroborated as it had been by what M. von Schoen had told me, relieved his mind, and gave him every hope that the course of our negotiations would continue without interruption. He had, he said, previously observed that there had been misgivings in the German mind that an understanding between Great Britain and Russia would in a sense isolate Germany, and that she

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

would see growing round her a ring in which she would be confined. He thought he had satisfied the German Government that there was no such intention, and he was glad that I had employed to M. von Schoen the phrase that the main object of our negotiations was to remove "causes of friction," as these were the identical words which he had used at Berlin. No doubt M. von Schoen had been instructed to give me the assurances which he had spontaneously conveyed to me, and he was of opinion that the atmosphere was considerably cleared.

M. Isvolsky said that his course was not without difficulty. He was most honestly and sincerely desirous of coming to a thoroughly friendly understanding with us; but he had to walk with care and prudence as the maintenance of good relations with Germany was very essential. His visit to Berlin had removed much uneasiness which he had previously felt, and he wished to assure me that he had found in his conversations at Berlin no suspicions or misgivings. They had put to him no leading or embarrassing questions, nor had they evinced any desire to ascertain on what lines our discussions were proceeding.

He added that the Councillor of the German Embassy M. von Miquel had intended to make a journey to Persia, but had now abandoned it, owing to the lateness of the season. This, he imagined, was an excuse, and he believed that he had received instructions to desist from his project.

I told M. Isvolsky that I had been a little surprised at M. von Schoen mentioning to me that Germany did not intend to establish a Bank at Teheran, as I had understood that a concession had already been granted and was on the point of being put into execution. His Excellency said that the concession had undoubtedly been accorded, and the magniloquent language which the German Chargé d'Affaires had held at Teheran in regard to it had caused him some anxiety. He had, however, ascertained that the Chargé d'Affaires had allowed himself to hold a language which was not authorized, and that, hitherto, no German Bank had been willing to undertake an enterprise which offered little remunerative prospects. In any case he had been assured at Berlin that the Bank would have no political character or aims, and would merely serve as an intermediary for purely commercial interests.⁽²⁾

M. Isvolsky assured me again that his mind was now at ease, and that he intended to devote all his energies towards facilitating an understanding with Great Britain which he was convinced was the right policy for his Government to pursue.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 396, No. 351, and p. 401, No. 356.]

No. 370.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

November, undated⁽²⁾, 1906.

In answer to your Despatch of the 4th of November, No. 735, and your private letters on the same subject,⁽³⁾ I would say that I see no objection to your giving to M. Isvolsky a sketch of an agreement as you propose, and one is being sent in a despatch.⁽⁴⁾ You should, however, make it clear to him that it does not pretend to

(¹) [Carnock MSS.]

(²) [This letter is undated, but the reference to the despatches of November 4 (*v. supra*, p. 408, No. 367) and November 17 (*v. infra*, p. 415, No. 371) suggests that it was dated between November 12 and November 17.]

(³) [*cp. supra*, pp. 250-1, No. 236.]

(⁴) [*v. immediately succeeding document.*]

be in treaty form and is rather in the nature of an *aide-mémoire* of what has been thrown out in conversation.

I do not wish the negotiations to go to sleep. But, on the other hand, we must avoid raising in M. Isvolsky's mind the suspicion that we wish to force the pace in order to take advantage of Russia's present situation.

I should, however, omit the last paragraph from the draft which you propose. It is not essential to an arrangement with Russia that we should each of us become parties to a promise to prevent third Powers from obtaining concessions in the parts of Persia in which we have each of us respectively renounced influence ourselves. It would be enough that we should each agree not to seek or maintain influence in the specified district reserved for the other. After our arrangement with Russia was completed, we could obtain from Persia an undertaking not to make concessions which would have any political character to a third Power in our specified district. Russia could do the same for herself, and it would follow from the arrangement which we and Russia had made that neither of us would oppose the other in making these separate arrangements with the Persian Government.

Such a settlement between Russia and us would give absolutely no opportunity or pretext to any other Country for saying that the settlement had infringed the principle of the open door.

Of course I understand M. Isvolsky's difficulty with the military party. Seistan is, no doubt, a place of strategic importance in their eyes. But it is only of such importance if they wish to attack the Indian frontier, or to put pressure upon us by making us think that they intend to attack it. The benefit which we expect from an arrangement with Russia is that we should be set free from any such apprehension, and this is precisely what we ask in the settlement.

If, as you suppose, M. Isvolsky will say at this point "But what is Russia to get in return," you will naturally reply that she gets in a certain specified district the same security that we get in Seistan. He will then probably point out that our gain in this matter is much greater than that of Russia, who is not really disturbed by the apprehension that aggression on our part in the North and North-West of Persia is practicable; and that he must, therefore, have a further *quid pro quo* with which to overcome the opposition of the military party, or at least to convince the Emperor that the opposition of the military party is unreasonable. *But it is for him to say what he wants.*

Probably, he already has something in his mind, but is hesitating to propose it. I think he should let us know what it is. If it is access to the Persian Gulf, that is a matter which should be referred to us for discussion. But I doubt, myself, whether any complete arrangement with Russia can be made unless it includes the Near East as well. It is the differences in the Near East that have been the original cause of the hostility and friction between Russia and us.

So far as the Russian Government are aware officially, our attitude in the Near East has not been changed. But it is not for us to propose changes with regard to the treaty conditions of the Dardanelles. I think some change in the direction desired by Russia would be admissible, and we should be prepared to discuss the question if Russia introduces it. If M. Isvolsky mentions it you might, therefore, say that it is a matter on which you are at present without instructions to speak to him, but which you will refer home. I enclose for your information only a departmental Memorandum on the Dardanelles.⁽⁵⁾ It shows that much may be possible, but it must not be taken yet as committing even me, much less the Cabinet, who have not seen it.

The difficulty is, of course, that the question of the Dardanelles concerns the other Powers of Europe. Our settlement with Russia, when completed, will have to be published, and so important a matter as a promise on our part to give diplomatic support in favour of any modification of a European treaty could not be introduced

(5) [v. *supra*, pp. 58-60, *Ed. note.*]

as a secret article. The fact that this is so makes it proper that M. Isvolsky, and not we, should be the first to mention the matter. It cannot be pressed without raising a European question, which it is Russia's interest and not ours to raise, though we might no longer object to seeing it reopened, as we should have objected a few years ago.

The sketch of a Persian agreement is founded upon yours, but the preamble was expanded by John Morley, and Hardinge has used the Anglo-Russian China Railway agreement as a model for the rest, so as to introduce terms already familiar to Russia.

I fear the temporary ascendancy of the reactionary party round the Tsar will not make the atmosphere favourable for these negotiations of ours.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 371.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 521.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 17, 1906.

I have received Y[our] E[xcellency's] despatch No. 735 of the 4th inst[ant],⁽¹⁾ reporting a conversation with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the understanding respecting Persia.

I approve the language which you held to M. Isvolsky on this occasion, and I enclose the sketch of a draft agreement which you are authorised to communicate to H[is] E[xcellency].

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 371.

Draft Agreement.

The Gov[ernmen]ts of G[reat] B[ritain] and R[ussia], being mutually pledged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia, and animated by a sincere desire for the maintenance of good order and pacific development throughout the Persian Empire as well as for the establishment of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations have resolved that a Convention be concluded between them in the following terms:—

The Gov[ernmen]ts of Great Britain and Russia mutually recognise that each has for geographical and economic reasons special interest in peace and order being maintained within certain provinces of Persia contiguous with, or in proximity to, the Russian frontier on the one hand and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Beluchistan on the other; and each of the two Gov[ernmen]ts, being impressed with the detrimental effects of local friction on their relations with Persia and with one another, is anxious to avoid all ground for interference with the special interests of each in the Persian provinces to which reference has been made above.

It is therefore hereby agreed as follows:—

1. Great Britain engages not to seek or maintain for her own account, or on behalf of British subjects, any concessions of a political or commercial nature within a line

and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for such concessions in that region supported by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 408–11, No. 367.]

2. Russia, on her part, engages not to seek or maintain for her own account, or on behalf of Russian subjects, any concessions of a political or commercial nature within a line passing from the Afghan frontier through Gazik, Birjand, Kerman and Bunder Abbas and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Beluchistan, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for such concessions in that region supported by the British Gov[ernment].

No. 372.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 796.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 2, 1906.

R. December 10, 1906.

M. Isvolsky called on me today to inform me that the Minister of Finance had received a telegram from the Director of the Russian Bank at Teheran stating that the Persian Prime Minister had expressed his willingness to sign the loan contract without having obtained the consent of the Assembly. M. Isvolsky said that it seemed to him that it would be desirable to obtain the opinions of the Russian and British Representatives as to whether it would be prudent to meet the wishes of the Prime Minister, and as to whether the refusal of the Assembly to sanction the loan could be ignored.

I told His Excellency that I was unaware what the precise functions and authority of the Assembly were in respect to loans, but that as its sanction had I understood been in the first instance solicited for the conclusion of the loan, it appeared to me that if we agreed with the Prime Minister in ignoring the opinions which the Assembly had expressed, we might cause some trouble in Persia. It was however a question on which it was clearly necessary to obtain the opinions of the Russian and British Representatives who, being on the spot, could give valuable advice on the point.

I read to M. Isvolsky the substance of Sir C. Spring Rice's telegram No. 348 of November 25th,⁽¹⁾ and said that it appeared that at that date the Prime Minister considered the consent of the Assembly as necessary. Possibly financial pressure had induced him to change his opinion; but it was impossible to judge of the situation at this distance.

M. Isvolsky agreed with my observations and said that he had heard nothing from M. Hartwig on the subject. So long as the Russian and British Governments continued to act in concert in regard to Persian affairs, he viewed occurrences in that country with calm. He would be glad to hear your views on the present question, and said that he had also telegraphed to Count Benckendorff.

I telegraphed the communication made to me by M. Isvolsky in my telegram No. 305 of this day's date.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 373.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 801.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 3, 1906.

R. December 10, 1906.

I had the honour to receive your despatch No. 521 of the 27th ultimo⁽¹⁾ by last week's messenger, transmitting the draft text of an agreement in respect to Persia.

⁽¹⁾ [Despatch No. 521 was dated November 17, not November 27, v. *supra*, pp. 415-6, No. 371.]

I called on M. Isvolsky this afternoon and I reminded His Excellency that some few weeks ago he had intimated to me the difficulties in his mind as to the mode in which it would be possible to reduce to a written form the views which we had interchanged in regard to an arrangement concerning our respective interests in Persia, without causing anxiety to the Persian Government and without disquieting other Governments who might have some Commercial interests in that country. I had, I said, received from you the outline of a draft agreement on the subject of Persia, which I begged leave to hand to him, and which I should be glad if he would treat as Confidential, and which, I thought, would remove the doubts which he had formerly expressed. I added that the documents was not drawn up in Treaty phraseology nor was it to be considered as a draft convention; it was merely an *aide-mémoire* of the views which we had interchanged presented in a convenient form.

M. Isvolsky read the document, and observed that he did not presume that I required an answer off hand. He added that even as drawn up others might regard it as a division ("partage") of Persia into spheres of influence.

I replied that I did not view it in that light; the document specified our respective spheres of interest, though the Russian sphere had to be left blank, and he would observe that in the preamble the principle of the open door had been duly recognised. I could not myself see how any objection could be raised in any quarter to the terms, tenour or objects of the document.

His Excellency said he would be glad if I would leave the paper with him to study carefully.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 374.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F. 371/170.

(No. 803.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 4, 1906.

R. December 10, 1906.

The German Ambassador asked me to-day whether M. Isvolsky had mentioned anything to me in regard to his recent visit to Berlin. I told M. von Schoen that M. Isvolsky had expressed great satisfaction at finding that the German Government viewed with a friendly eye the discussions which were proceeding between the British and Russian Governments for the purpose of removing all causes of friction between the two countries in Persia and Central Asia, and that he had been pleased to ascertain that the only interests as to which the German Government were concerned were the Bagdad Railway, which lay outside of the Persian question, and the maintenance of the open door for commercial intercourse. This satisfaction on the part of His Excellency had been confirmed by the speech of Prince Bülow in the Reichstag.

M. von Schoen again confirmed what he had said to me on a previous occasion, and which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 738 Confidential on the 5th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ and added that M. Isvolsky had enquired whether in the future the German Government would have any objection to Russia obtaining concessions for railways in the north of Persia. His Excellency had been informed that no objection would be raised to such concessions, as Germany had no desire to embark on such enterprises in Persia. M. von Schoen observed that he doubted if Russia would for a long time to come be in a position to take advantage of any concessions she might obtain, as she was exceedingly slow to move in those directions. If Russia would construct a railway which would eventually be linked on to the Bagdad Railway, so much the better for all parties.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 411-2, No. 368.]

I remarked that I believed that in some Russian quarters there was no great desire to facilitate inter-communications which might lead to foreign trade competing with the practical monopoly Russian commerce enjoyed in the North of Persia; and that this fear had caused her to hesitate at one time to welcome the project of the Bagdad Railway.

M. von Schoen said that it was true that such views had been held in Russia in regard to the Bagdad Railway, but that a change had now come over Russian public opinion. The moment had not yet arrived for the German Government to approach those of France, Great Britain and Russia, as to a participation in the Bagdad Railway, or perhaps it would be more correct to say for financial groups in the several countries to commence negotiations on the subject. The question was not yet quite ripe for such discussions.

M. von Schoen said further that as regards a German Bank in Persia, he could tell me that the Persian Government when in urgent need of money, and when they were not meeting with a ready response from the British and Russian Governments, had approached the German Chargé d'Affaires and had suggested that a German Bank should be established in Tehran which would effect loans and other financial transactions.⁽²⁾ The Chargé d'Affaires, anxious to play a part, had accepted this suggestion, and had asked the German Government to enquire if any German Bank would be willing to establish a banking institution in Tehran. Several Banks had refused to entertain the proposal, but one Bank, M. von Schoen did not mention the name, which had branches at Constantinople and Beyrout had expressed its readiness to enquire into the matter, and was sending an agent to Persia who should arrive there next month. M. von Schoen did not think that the Bank would establish a branch at Teheran, probably at some other place in Persia, but in any case the branch would have nothing to do with loans or concessions, but confine itself to strictly commercial affairs.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Interesting.

E. G.

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 396, No. 351, and p. 401, No. 356.]

No. 375.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, December 15, 1906.

F.O. 371/170.

D. 8.8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 307.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

Persian Loan.

I have received private letter from Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] stating that Russian Gov[ernmen]t agree with you that the advance should be made publicly and responsibility lie with Persian Gov[ernmen]t. They also agree that it would be preferable to wait till Persian Gov[ernmen]t and assembly had arranged between themselves, but they see no objection to furnishing the advance on a formal demand from Persian Prime Min[iste]r even if latter had not succeeded in overcoming opposition of the assembly. Russian Gov[ernmen]t also consider that it would be well if Russian and British Representatives were to inform heir apparent of the loan question.

Instructions have been sent in the above sense to the Russian Min[iste]r and Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] would be glad if similar instructions could be sent to Sir C. Spring Rice.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 821.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 16, 1906.

R. December 24, 1906.

On the 9th instant I wrote a private letter to M. Isvolsky stating that he had doubtless heard from Teheran that the Russian and British Representatives were of opinion that the advance to be made to the Persian Treasury should be done publicly and on the responsibility of the Persian Government; and that it would be desirable to await a settlement of the differences between that Government and the popular party. I added that His Majesty's Government were in agreement with these views.

I further stated that I had received information from Teheran to the effect that the Assembly had collected sufficient money to pay the arrears due to the troops, and that I knew that his view was that no steps should be taken on our part, as the money was at the disposal of the Persian Government, on the conditions laid down by the two Governments, and that neither Government had any desire to force its acceptance on the Persian Government.

At my interview yesterday with His Excellency he read and handed to me a reply of which I have the honour to transmit a copy. On reading this letter again it seemed to me that there might be a possibility that the Russian Minister might act on his instructions before His Majesty's Government had had an opportunity of expressing their views as to whether a formal demand from the Grand Vizier for the advance, irrespective of the assent of the Assembly, should be immediately accepted. I therefore wrote a letter to M. Isvolsky, of which I beg leave to enclose a copy, expressing the hope that M. Hartwig would not carry out his instructions without a previous agreement with Sir Cecil Spring Rice.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have received a reply from M. Isvolsky, of which I have the honour to transmit a copy, in regard to the instructions given to M. Hartwig.

Enclosure 1 in No. 376.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Saint-Petersbourg, le 2 (15) Décembre, 1906.

Le Gouvernement Impérial partage le point de vue du Gouvernement Britannique au sujet de l'avance pécuniaire à faire à la Perse et trouve en effet indispensable que l'avance soit faite publiquement et que la responsabilité en soit assumée par le Gouvernement du Schah.

Tout en pensant, d'accord avec le Gouvernement Britannique qu'il serait peut être préférable d'attendre que le Sadrazam parvienne à établir une entente avec le Medjliss au sujet de l'avance, le Gouvernement Impérial ne verrait pourtant pas d'objections à ce que les sommes promises fussent délivrées au Gouvernement Persan sur une demande formelle de Mouchir-oud-Dovleh, même dans le cas où ce dernier ne parviendrait pas à vaincre la résistance de l'Assemblée Nationale. Dans tous les cas il paraît désirable qu'à son arrivée à Téhéran le Valiahd soit prévenu par les Représentants d'Angleterre et de Russie de l'opération financière en question.

Des ordres détaillés dans ce sens ont été expédiés au Ministre de Russie à Téhéran et je vous serais fort reconnaissant si vous pouviez contribuer à ce que des instructions dans le même sens soient envoyées à M. [sic] C. Spring-Rice.

ISVOLSKI.

Enclosure 2 in No. 376.

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

Mon cher Ministre,

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 3 (16) Décembre, 1906.

J'ai relu la lettre que vous avez bien voulu me communiquer hier au sujet de l'avance à faire au Gouvernement Persan et je n'ai pas manqué d'en transmettre le sens à mon Gouvernement. Je présume que les instructions envoyées à M. Hartwig ne seront mises en exécution qu'après accord préalable avec Sir C. Spring-Rice, car je sais bien que vous désirez autant que nous que les deux Ministres agissent dans cette question en parfaite harmonie. Sir C. Spring-Rice recevra sans doute des instructions de mon Gouvernement et il serait à désirer si M. Hartwig voudrait bien attendre jusqu'à ce que son collègue anglais soit mise en demeure de connaître les vues de Sir E. Grey.

Veuillez, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 3 in No. 376.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 4 (17) Décembre, 1906.

Le principe fondamental des instructions que nous avons données à M. de Hartwig, dès le début des négociations au sujet de l'avance commune à faire aux Persans, étant d'agir en parfaite harmonie avec son Collègue d'Angleterre, je pensais qu'il était superflu de lui donner des indications complémentaires à cet égard. Mais, puisque Vous m'en avez exprimé le désir, je m'empresse de lui expédier par télégraphe des ordres dans le sens de Votre lettre.

Votre bien dévoué

ISVOLSKY.

No. 377.

*Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward,

December 21, 1906.

. . . . Private news of Hartwig's language doesn't look as if Russia had any intention of debarring herself from access to Seistan and eventually the Gulf of Oman. But personally he is most friendly and so are his subordinates. Of course it isn't hard to be friendly under the circumstances as since I have been here, the popular party have learned that they must not lean on England for support, and this has made an enormous difference to the power of Russia—so that the evil year or two after the Japanese war—can be, in all probability, lived through without any serious diminution of prestige. We must all remember that in July August and September the influence of England was quite supreme and that Russia had no power at all. Now, of course, this is changed and though England is looked to with respect she is not looked to for protection and support, and the popular party is therefore become more purely Persian. Also the rumours of an understanding with Russia have given the impression that we have sold out our interest to Persia. Altogether whether successful or not, the negotiations between England and Russia have been of enormous

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 31.]

value to the latter. We have voluntarily surrendered our position here, in exchange for a *promise*. I hope that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t may realise this: It is certainly true. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

C. A. SPRING-RICE.

⁽²⁾ [The opening paragraphs of this letter give a detailed account of the Persian internal situation and the Russian attitude. The closing sentence is purely personal.]

No. 378.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/170.

(No. 830.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 22, 1906.

R. December 27, 1906.

With reference to my despatch No. 821 of the 16th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit, herewith, copy of a letter which I have addressed to M. Isvolsky relative to His Excellency's proposals that in the event of the Mushir ed Dowleh making a formal demand for the payment of the joint advance no difficulty should be made to meeting his wishes, and also that the Valiahd should be made acquainted with the question of a loan to the Persian Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 378.

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

*Ambassade d'Angleterre, Saint-Petersbourg,
le 9 (22) Décembre, 1906.*

Mon cher Ministre,

En réponse à la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser le 2/15 courant, relative à l'avance au Gouvernement Persan, mon Gouvernement pense qu'il serait peut-être mieux si les deux Légations à Téhéran continuent à observer l'attitude de réserve qu'elles ont jusqu'ici adoptée à ce sujet.

Si le Mouchir ed Dowleh nous fait une demande formelle nous pourrions alors examiner sa proposition en tenant compte des circonstances qui pourraient exister à ce moment; et il nous paraît plus prudent de ne pas en saisir le Valiahd de l'opération financière vu qu'il a déjà eu des entretiens avec une députation de l'Assemblée au sujet des questions financières.

La situation en Perse en ce qui concerne les fonctions et les relations de l'Assemblée avec le Gouvernement semble toujours être un peu indécise, et dans ces circonstances une attitude de complète réserve de la part des deux Légations serait à l'avis de mon Gouvernement la plus prudente.

J'espère que vous partagerez cette manière de voir et croyez-moi toujours.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 419-20, No. 376.]

No. 379.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Tehran, December 26, 1906.

F.O. 371/170.

Tel. (No. 376.)

Persian advance.

Following is result of conversation with Russian Min[iste]r.

D. 12.35 P.M.

R. 5.40 P.M.

Popular movement against the loan is still strong but it is possible, owing to severe financial pressure, that the Valiahd and Grand Vizier may apply for loan, throwing the odium on us on the ground that they acceded under pressure. The two Banks are obliged to restrict their advances to merchants owing to uncertainty as to whether advance will be asked for and this gives rise to the impression that we are trying to force loan on the Gov[ernmen]t against the will of the people.

We think that it would be advisable to inform Grand Vizier officially that the two Gov[ernmen]ts withdraw their offer and let this be known. Otherwise the two Legations may be accused of contributing funds to the Gov[ernmen]t in order to suppress popular movement.

No. 380.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, January 3, 1907.

F.O. 371/369.

D. 3.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 2.)

R. 6.30 P.M.

Persian advance: My telegram No. 1.

I have received another private letter from Minister for Foreign Affairs, stating that he hears from Russian Minister at Tehran that Sir C. Spring-Rice is of opinion that if the two Governments notify withdrawal of offer, an arrangement may be made with financiers of other countries. Russian Minister would therefore wish to be authorized not to notify withdrawal of the offer until he and his British colleague are agreed as to the proper moment for doing so.

Russian Government see no objection to this course, and if His Majesty's Government concur in above view necessary instructions will be sent to Russian Minister.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asks for early reply. Shall I inform him that you concur?⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Tel. No. 2 to Sir A. Nicolson of January 4, 1907, replied to this: "Your tel[egram] No. 2. Persian advance. We concur." This was repeated to Tehran as Tel. No. 2 of the same date.]

No. 381.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 4.)

Tehran, D. January 3, 1907.

Sir,

R. January 21, 1907.

In obedience to your instructions I have carefully abstained from entering into any discussion with M. Hartwig as to the possible basis of an agreement between England and Russia with regard to Persia. At the same time I venture to think it may be useful if I were to communicate to you any indication as to the general policy pursued here by the Russian Legation which may reach me from indirect but authentic sources. To quote Sir A. Hardinge's words: "At London and St. Petersburg the European, here in Asia the Tartar, head of the Russian double eagle is most plainly visible"⁽¹⁾ and I venture to hope that I may be excused if I

⁽¹⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 373, No. 321 (b).]

present for the consideration of His Majesty's Government the *local* aspect of the Asiatic policy of Russia.

From conversations which some of my colleagues and a newspaper correspondent who has been sent here to represent the Russian view of the Persian question, have had with M. Hartwig and which they have, in general outline, communicated to me, it appears that the policy of the Russian Legation here is wholly opposed to any form of division of Persia into spheres of interest which would debar Russia from obtaining access to a port outside the Gulf or from constructing such railways or means of communication as would best serve her commercial and political interests. Persia is to be assured her independence and integrity as long as she is willing to obey the dictates of her Russian advisers and accord to Russia such advantages as may be in accordance with Russian interests.

And, specifically, the policy of Russia must be continually concerned with the whole of the East of Persia, where, as M. Hartwig puts it, it is a vital interest of Russia to obtain such influence and control as may enable her to prevent the spread of infection from Indian sources, the importation of arms, and, above all the absorption of Seistan by Great Britain or the establishment in that province of English control.

At the same time M. Hartwig is sincerely desirous of improving the relations between England and Russia, and while safeguarding Russian influence, to live on the best possible terms with the British Legation. He is considerably embarrassed by the independent action of the financial agent and by the separate policy pursued without the knowledge and consent of the Russian Foreign Office, by other Departments of the Russian Government. He is anxious to avoid any form of active interference in Persian domestic politics and has done all in his power to convince popular opinion that the Russian Legation is not hostile to the popular movement and has even exerted his influence with the Valiahd to secure a compromise with the Assembly. He is opposed for the moment to any active measure of interference and is doing all in his power to dissuade his Government from yielding to the dictates of the advocates of a forward policy.

I venture to ask your most careful attention to Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 126 of the 10th June, 1905, in which he explains in a singularly clear and striking form, what he takes to be the policy of Russia in Persia, viewed in the light of the actual proceedings of Russian agents on the spot. I am inclined to believe that what he wrote then is true now. Since he wrote however, there has occurred, what he anticipated—namely a great popular awakening and protest against the sale of Persia, through corrupt officials, to a foreign Government. And the "antiseptic treatment" of which he speaks, is now being inaugurated, not by a concert between England and Russia, but by the Persian people themselves. I venture to think that in this way possibly lies the hope of the salvation of Persia, and the solution of the Persian question. Should foreign powers, and especially England and Russia consent to lend a friendly hand, or at any rate not to impede the process of regeneration Persia may yet save herself. But if she does the designs of Russia, which have so long aimed at her practical absorption, will be as definitely frustrated as they have been in Bulgaria, and it cannot be hoped that the Russian Government, at least as at present constituted, will tamely acquiesce in such a conclusion.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

No. 382.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/302.

(No. 15.) Secret.

Sir,

*Tehran, D. January 4, 1907.**R. January 21, 1907.*

I have the honour to state that I had good reason to believe that some days ago a long cyphered despatch was received by the German Legation from Berlin on the subject of Russo-German relations in Persia and that a report had been called from the German Minister. Since then I have received information to the effect that Russia has offered to withdraw her objections to the Bagdad Railway and generally to German enterprise in Mesopotamia on the condition that she herself should have the right of constructing the Kanikin-Bagdad branch and of fixing the tariff on the railway when constructed. I need not point out that the tariff as fixed by Russia would make all trade from the South or West to Persia by that route impossible and would give Russia the monopoly of Persian trade which, so far at least as concerns imports, would be reserved for Russian industry and the Tiflis-Tabriz-Hamadan route. I believe that the German Minister's reply was in this sense.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

MINUTE.

We have no corroboration of this story, which looks as though it came from a Persian or German source with the object of sowing distrust between England and Russia.

C. H.
E. G.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On the death of Shah Muzaffur-ud-Din on January 8, 1907 (*v. supra*, p. 356, *Ed. note*), his eldest son, Mohammed Ali Mirza, was recognized as the new Shah. The British and Russian Governments then exchanged notes on January 11 recognizing his second son, Sultan Ahmed Mirza, as Valiahd or Heir-Apparent. He was publicly proclaimed Valiahd on January 25. The new Shah had already been crowned on January 19, and the fact that he did not invite the Deputies to the ceremony was commented on at the Assembly the same day.]

No. 383.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/301.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

*Tehran, D. January 27, 1907.**R. February 18, 1907.*

I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of the Persian Constitution⁽¹⁾ which has been prepared by Mr. Churchill.

It provides for a National Assembly composed of from 160 to 200 members chosen by popular election and of a Senate of 60 members, half of whom are elected and half nominated by the Government.

The Assembly is elected for two years and the Shah by a separate rescript has promised not to dissolve it before the expiration of its first term. After the first term it can be dissolved on a motion passed by two-thirds of the Senate and approved by the Shah.

The members take oath "so long as the rights of the Assembly are respected to be loyal to the Sovereign and the rights of the Nation."

The Ministers, who are appointed by the Sovereign, can be summoned before the Assembly to give explanations as to their conduct of affairs and are made responsible to the Assembly for any derogation of their powers, or infraction of the laws. They can address the Assembly on the invitation of the President and have the right of proposing bills in person.

(¹) [Not reproduced. The texts of the Constitution and of certain related documents are given in E. G. Browne: *The Persian Revolution, 1905-1910* (1910), Appendix A.]

The Assembly must give its consent before any concession is granted, or loan foreign or internal is concluded, and must be consulted as to any treaty with a foreign power, except such arrangements as in the opinion of the Government, should be kept secret in the public interest. It has control of all financial matters and must give its consent before the budget is passed, or any new tax is instituted. The Senate has concurrent legislative power, except in financial matters on which however it appears to have the right of veto.

In case of disagreement between the two houses a joint committee is appointed and if an agreement is not arrived at, the Senate can, by two-thirds majority, require the dissolution of the Assembly, provided that this does not take place more than once in the two years' term.

General powers of examination into the conduct of affairs by the Government, and of direct access to the Shah are provided for. The members are inviolable and the proceedings are public, with certain reservations as to the proceedings of secret committees.

Full liberty of reporting proceedings and of comment (provided this is not of a libellous character) is accorded to the press.

It will be seen that if the Constitution is carried into effect the Persian Government is now a limited monarchy, the Ministers however, although responsible for their conduct to the Assembly, being nominated by the Sovereign, and not elected members. The powers of the Assembly include financial control and no loan can be made by the Government without its consent.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

No. 384.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Tehran, February 11, 1907.

F.O. 371/369.

Tel. (No. 28.)

D. 6 P.M.

R. 10.30 P.M.

All quiet here, though definite arrangement is not made with Shah. British Consul at Tabreez reports that people have taken possession of arsenal and Government offices.⁽²⁾ No disorder, but people are determined, and have received assurances of support from Kurdistan. Russian Minister says that he thinks that a demonstration on frontier and in Gulf may become necessary if situation gets worse.

As yet no movement against foreigners personally, but on first appearance of this I think Russian Government will be bound to make some sort of military demonstration. I hope that this will be delayed until it is justified by overt act against foreigners, but preparatory arrangements should, I think, be agreed on at once between the two Governments.

Zil-es-Sultan has sounded Russian Minister as to possible military action.

⁽¹⁾ [Sir E. Grey replied as follows to Sir C. Spring-Rice, Tel. No. 18 of February 12, 1907, D. 7 P.M.:

Your tel[egram] No. 28. I entirely approve your statement that we cannot consent to any demonstration in favour of Persian Government and against reform movement.

I see the difficulty of the Russian position but we must on no account be drawn into any show of force unless made absolutely necessary for protection of foreigners and even then for physical reasons our action must be confined to the Ports. You should therefore use all your influence to discourage the Russians from contemplating any demonstration with a view to political effect; which would be clearly contrary to the principle of non-intervention.

(Repeat to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 18.)]

⁽²⁾ [The Shah was reported as accepting the demands of the people on February 11.]

I have explained to Russian Minister that I do not believe that His Majesty's Government will consent to any political demonstration in favour of Government, but only to action justified by considerations of self-defence. Russian view may be different, in view of political situation in Caucasus and Central Asia.

(Addressed to Foreign Office; sent to India and St. Petersburg.)

MINUTE.

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t are evidently anxious for a pretext for intervention to which we are opposed. Any discussion of arrangement for military demonstration would only encourage them in this idea. As Sir C. Spring-Rice still thinks that we should concert measures with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t for a military demonstration, I think he should be informed very categorically of our views which he does not as yet seem to understand. At present there appears to be no danger to foreigners.

C. H.

No. 385.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/303.

Tel. (No. 16.)

Foreign Office, February 11, 1907.

Advance to Shah.

Your tel[egram] No. 24.⁽¹⁾

You may use your discretion acting throughout in concert with your Russian colleague; we wish if possible to avoid any pretext for an accusation of interference in internal affairs of Persia.

Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 16, February 11, 1907.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram of February 10, 1906, suggests that the British and Russian Ministers should use their discretion as to the advance, and advocates a policy of non-interference.]

No. 386.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/303.

(No. 79.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 11, 1907.

Sir,

R. February 18, 1907.

I called on M. Isvolsky the day before yesterday and communicated to him the substance of Sir C. Spring-Rice's telegram of the 8th instant⁽¹⁾ regarding an advance to be made to the Shah in view of the disquieting situation in Teheran. I asked His Excellency if he had heard from M. de Hartwig on the subject, and he replied in the negative. He said that he was anxious to act entirely in concert with His Majesty's Government in all matters concerning Persia, and asked me if I would let him take note of the details of the proposed transaction so that he might consult with the Minister of Finance with whom he had an appointment the same evening. He enquired if Sir C. Spring-Rice had already made the advance or whether he was awaiting instructions from his Government. I said that I gathered from the telegram

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram, No. 24 of February 8, 1907, reports application by the Shah to M. Naus for an advance. Upon M. Hartwig's representation that the Russian Bank had exhausted its credit, Sir C. Spring-Rice proposed "to authorize Imperial Bank of Persia to advance to M. Naus a sum of 30,000l. . . . in the form of a joint advance by the two banks on current account under the Shah's signature. . . ."]

that the matter was of some urgency, and it was possible that Sir C. Spring-Rice had considered it necessary to act with promptitude, but I could not say positively what steps had actually been taken. It seemed to me that, as affairs seemed to be in a somewhat critical condition, great latitude should be accorded to the Representatives on the spot, but it was essential that they should keep in constant touch with each other. I added that I felt sure that he would impress on M. de Hartwig to act in perfect concert with Sir C. Spring-Rice, who had on more than one occasion expressed to me his pleasure at the cordial and intimate relations which he maintained with his Russian colleague. M. Isvolsky said that it was of great importance that the two Governments should be in complete harmony, and he had no fear of the future in Persia if both Governments acted in unison.

I subsequently received your telegram No. 12 of the 9th instant, informing me that His Majesty's Government were prepared to authorize the joint advance provided the Russian Government concurred.⁽²⁾ I at once communicated this to M. Isvolsky, and I received early this morning a letter from His Excellency of which I beg leave to enclose a copy, and of which I telegraphed the substance in my telegram No. 18 of to-day's date.⁽²⁾

Since the dispatch of the above telegram, I have received Sir C. Spring-Rice's telegram of yesterday's date, recommending that he and his Russian colleague should be authorized to use their own discretion in regard to the advance.⁽³⁾ I have little doubt that M. Isvolsky will be willing, on the part of the Russian Government to leave the matter in the hands of M. de Hartwig, and as I am to see His Excellency this evening in regard to some other questions I will enquire of him what further information he has received from Teheran.

I may add that I mentioned at the conclusion of my conversation of the 9th instant with M. Isvolsky, that in view of the constantly shifting, and to an outsider somewhat obscure, situation in Persia, great caution appeared to be desirable, as any false step might prejudice our joint interests in that country, and might facilitate the possible aims of other countries. M. Isvolsky said that so long as we went hand in hand he regarded Persia as a "champ clos" to others and on my remarking that fortunately the new German Minister in Teheran seemed to be a calm, peaceable man, he laughingly observed that he always felt some anxiety in regard to quiet reserved men, if they had a settled policy to pursue, and he did not know if he did not prefer the indiscreet exuberance of the former youthful Chargé d'Affaires of Germany, as he left no doubt as to the aims which he was pursuing.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 386.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

*Ministère Impérial des Affaires Etrangères,
le 28 Janvier (10 Février), 1907.*

D'après les nouvelles que j'ai de Téhéran, notre Ministre a déjà donné à Sir Cecil Spring-Rice son adhésion à l'avance à faire en commun au Shah, et le Gouvernement Impérial confirme entièrement cette décision.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

ISVOLSKY.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 426, No. 385, note.]

No. 387.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, February 12, 1907.*

F.O. 371/369.

D. 8.22 P.M.

Tel. (No. 22.) Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Persian situation.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that he had consulted with Minister of War and Chief of General Staff on Persian affairs. Policy of Russian Government is as follows: To abstain from all interference in internal affairs of Persia; not to adopt any military measures unless they are rendered absolutely necessary, and in case they have to be employed, to keep them within narrowest possible limits; to do nothing without previous consultation with His Majesty's Government, and to act generally in close harmony with His Majesty's Government. He expressed hope that such an attitude would be reciprocally observed by His Majesty's Government. I assured him that he need have no doubts on that point.

(Sent to Tehran.)

(1) [Despatch No. 85 of February 12, 1907, gives this at somewhat greater length, and Tel. No. 19 to Sir A. Nicolson of February 13, 1907, expresses entire concurrence in this policy.]

No. 388.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 98.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 19, 1907.

Sir,

R. February 26, 1907.

After the conversation between M. Isvolsky and myself in regard to the Thibetan Convention had terminated, His Excellency said that he wished to speak to me with respect to our arrangement as to Persia. He might tell me that after considerable difficulty he had succeeded in inducing the General Staff to accept in principle the mode in which we proposed to come to an understanding, and that they had also admitted in principle the British zone of interest which had been defined by the line sketched in the *Pro memoria* which I had communicated to him. The paper which he had in his hands was a summary of the views of the Russian Government on the subject, and he would communicate it to me in writing as soon as he had carefully reviewed its terms and its form. He could tell me that the Russian line would run from Kuchan through Yezd and Isfahan to Kasr el Sherin; and that the Russian Government considered that it would be better to specify the concessions in our respective zones for which we should reciprocally abstain from requesting. They would be railways, roads and others. At the same time those concessions at present existing should be maintained. I interrupted M. Isvolsky at this point and asked if by the maintenance of existing concessions he referred to the Meshed Seistan telegraph line, as I thought it necessary to inform him that my Government attributed importance to that question being settled in accordance with our views. M. Isvolsky said that he was of opinion that the question of the two telegraph lines Meshed-Nasratabad and Teheran-Meshed could best be settled by a separate arrangement. I said that this might be so, but in my opinion the only solution was a transfer of the two lines to Russian and British control respectively. I enquired of His Excellency what were the other existing concessions to which he referred. He replied that the Russian Bank had several agencies in Seistan, and the customs of that province also formed a portion of the securities guaranteed for the service of Russian loans. The

(1) [A telegram giving a shorter account of the conversation reported here is printed, *supra*, p. 275, No. 253.]

British advances were secured, he said, on the customs revenues of Farsistan and the Persian Gulf; while the Russian loans were guaranteed on the northern and the Seistan customs.

M. Isvolsky then said that he was anxious to be made acquainted with the proposals which we were prepared to make for an arrangement as to Afghanistan, as the Persian question was so closely related with that of Afghanistan, and the one could not be settled without the other. I told His Excellency that I was not yet in a position to communicate our proposals, but that I hoped shortly to be able to do so. His Excellency pressed me to give him a general idea of them, but I said that it would be impossible for me to do so until I could communicate them in detail; but I would be glad if he could tell me the views of the Russian Government as to the close relationship between the two questions.

M. Isvolsky said that he would recapitulate to me in general terms the views of the Russian Government. We had requested Russia to practically give us a free hand in Seistan, and it was probable at some future date we should carry a railway into that district. Now, the military party was of opinion that by abandoning Seistan to us an important strategical position was being ceded, and that it was necessary to examine carefully the position of Russia. It would be a very serious matter to Russia if, in addition to a railway communication say between Nasratabad and India, and possibly down to the Southern coast, railways were also constructed from India into Afghanistan. The whole strategical *status quo* would thereby be materially altered to the great disadvantage of Russia. Afghanistan had, hitherto, been considered a buffer state, but supposing Great Britain was, in conjunction with the Ameer, to alter the existing relations into those of a far more intimate nature, and that the Ameer consented to British officers reorganising his troops and was willing to have railways constructed and roads made? Supposing further that differences hereafter arose between Russia and Japan, and that we, as the ally of Japan, were to take the side of that country? It was undeniable that Russia would in the circumstances alluded to above strategically be in a far weaker position than she was under existing conditions. He was, he said, repeating to me the views of military men, but I would see that the Persian question was closely connected with that of Afghanistan.

I replied that I understood the connection between the two questions, but I thought that there were weak points in the arguments he had placed before me. Our agreement had in view the establishment of a state of peace, and not a possible state of war. I told him candidly that we wished Seistan to be within our zone for purely defensive reasons. M. Isvolsky interposed the remark that there was "défense active" as well as a "défense passive." As to possible railway extension into Seistan or to the coast, I would not discuss the question, and apparently as matters stood for the moment there was an Assembly at Teheran who would have a word to say in the matter. Moreover, admitting even that Russia gave us a free hand in a strategical position, we at the same time were conceding a similar advantage to Russia in other parts of Persia. The one concession balanced the other. I added that I did not quite seize the purport of his observations as to Afghanistan. As to British officers reorganizing the Ameer's troops that did not seem probable at a time when no British officer could set foot across the frontier. I gathered that he, or the military party, was under the apprehension that we intended, or wished, to bring Afghanistan under our protection in the same manner as say Beloochistan. That seemed to me a far-fetched fear. He had mentioned railways, but if the Ameer were inspired with the desire to develop and open up his country, we could not prevent him from realising such a wish.

M. Isvolsky said he understood that; but who would construct the railways and whither would they lead? Evidently they would be built by British assistance and would run to India. Count Benckendorff remarked that we had a treaty with Afghanistan and that the idea was that we should not go farther than the treaty. I asked if it was desired that the political *status quo* should be maintained. I

understood M. Isvolsky to say that this was so; and also that some arrangement should be made for regulating the relations between Russian and Afghan frontier officials and also in regard to trade.

I said that perhaps on these points an understanding could be reached; but that I must await your instructions.

M. Isvolsky then said that there was one other matter which he wished to mention to me. Russia and Great Britain were drawing up an agreement which would preclude either party from seeking for concessions in the zone of the other, but what about third parties? I said that I understood our original idea was that when both Governments had come to an understanding, we should severally apply to the Persian Government to engage not to allow concessions to third parties in our zones. M. Isvolsky remarked that this would be shutting the door in a considerable portion of Persia; and that we should be face to face with a similar situation to that which had arisen over Morocco. Germany would not trouble us in Seistan; but it would be necessary for Russia to come to an arrangement with her in regard to the Russian zone. Such an arrangement could only be made over the Bagdad railway. I remarked that Teutonic activity might as well be developed in Seistan as elsewhere in Persia, and I was under the impression that as regards the Bagdad Railway, the situation was that Russia, France and Great Britain would be ready to participate in it whenever Germany made overtures for foreign assistance. M. Isvolsky replied that Russia had hitherto assumed an obstructive attitude towards the Bagdad Railway. She could withdraw this obstruction on the understanding that Germany engaged to leave her alone in her zone. I understood M. Isvolsky to say that an arrangement in respect to the Bagdad railway should be made "*d'un commun accord.*"

M. Isvolsky said in conclusion that he considered that we had made sensible progress towards a general understanding, and he earnestly trusted that our negotiations before long would reach a satisfactory conclusion. He was happy to tell me that his discussions with the Japanese Minister were progressing amicably and smoothly, and that he was now quite satisfied with the outlook. He proposed to make three conventions with Japan as to commerce, fisheries and railway junctions: and also two *Actes Généraux*; one a Treaty of Arbitration similar to that which we had concluded with France, and one establishing that both Japan and Russia would observe and preserve the *status quo* in the Far East. He then thought that humanly speaking peace could be assured for some time to come. I said that such an arrangement would, I was sure, be most welcome to my Government, and I asked if the Japanese Government showed a favourable disposition towards it. His Excellency replied in the affirmative.

The impression which I gathered from my long interview was that the Russian Government are sincerely desirous of arriving at an arrangement with us; but that they are nervous lest our relations with Afghanistan should develop into such cordial intimacy as would lead to the Ameer coming under our direct influence to an extent which neither he nor his predecessors had hitherto permitted. The Russian Government, therefore, are desirous of obtaining, if possible, some assurance that the general character of our relations with the Ameer should undergo no radical change, and that they should indeed remain as they are at present. It is possible that His Majesty's Government may not feel disposed to bind themselves as to the future; but I am confident that, if no assurances at all can be given, it will be difficult. I should be inclined to say impossible, to come to a satisfactory arrangement as to Persia. I was not able to obtain a precise and clear pronouncement from M. Isvolsky as to what exactly the Russian Government required on the above point. When I communicate to him our proposals as to Afghanistan, I shall, I trust, succeed in obtaining a definite exposition of the Russian views.

I would also respectfully beg leave to recommend strongly that the favourable conditions which now prevail in regard to our negotiations should not be allowed to disappear; and though in dealing with important questions excessive haste is to be

deprecated, still it would be most unfortunate if on our side any undue delay were to occur, and if the continuous course of our discussions were to be interrupted by intervals of silence. Those who are opposed to an understanding with us, and who with difficulty have been won over, would interpret any delay on our part as a sign of indifference or of suspicion, and this would injuriously affect the prospects of a favourable solution.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 389.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 101.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 20, 1907.

Sir, *R. February 26, 1907.*

M. Isvolsky handed me to-day a Draft Convention in regard to the future mutual relations between Great Britain and Russia which had been drawn up by the Russian Government, of which I have the honour to transmit a copy. I did not peruse it in his presence and accepted it without comment. I regret that I made a confusion in telegraphing yesterday between Kuhsan and Kuchan, but the misunderstanding was due to my not catching accurately the pronunciation of the names of the two places.

The preamble is identical with that of the British Draft Convention except that the word "collision" is used in the last sentence instead of "interference."

As to article II I have, since despatching my telegraphic summary of the Russian Draft Convention, examined the Draft which I communicated to M. Isvolsky, and I find that the definition of the British line is practically identical in both documents. The observation which I made in my telegram⁽¹⁾ in regard to the words "par les frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan" was, therefore, made without due consideration.

The final paragraph will, I presume, require some amplification and amendment. I do not know whether you would consider it necessary to specify in the Convention that the revenues of the Caspian Sea Fisheries and the posts and telegraphs form securities for the British loans, but in any case it would, I submit, be right to state clearly that the Customs revenues of the Fars and of the Persian Gulf are secured for the service of the British advances. As the paragraph stands there is no mention of British loans at all. I do not know whether in the Convention you would consider it desirable to mention that Mohammerah is included in the Persian Gulf ports; or to leave this debatable point alone. We could not be considered as having abandoned our views by preserving the phrase "Fars and the Persian Gulf."

There is no mention, as from my conversation with M. Isvolsky on the 18th instant I had been led to expect, of the maintenance of the existing concessions in our respective zones. The omission to mention them, and as the articles deal with the future, leads me to think that the Russian Government imply that such concessions do continue to exist. M. Isvolsky apparently wishes to arrange the question of the two telegraph lines separately from the Convention. You may consider that there is no objection to such procedure. If, on the other hand, we desired that all Russian Bank agencies in Seistan, for instance, be withdrawn, the Russian Government might request that we should abandon concessions in the Russian zone, and this might raise the question of the Indo-European and Indian Government telegraph lines, Imperial Bank, &c. It might be wiser, perhaps, to leave the question of existing concessions alone, and restrict ourselves to finding outside the Convention a solution of the Meshed-Tehran and Meshed-Nasratabad lines. I submit this view with all diffidence. When both Governments have come to an agreement as to the Convention.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 276, No. 254.]

I do not think there would be great difficulty in arranging as to the above-mentioned telegraph lines.

I should be grateful if you would kindly supply me with the final paragraph amended in the sense desired by His Majesty's Government, so that I may communicate it to M. Isvolsky.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 389.

Draft Convention communicated by M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/369.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse et animés du sincère désir de maintenir l'ordre et le développement pacifique dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire Persan, aussi bien que d'établir des avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les nations, ont résolu qu'une convention sera conclue entre eux aux termes suivants :

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie reconnaissent mutuellement que chacun d'eux a pour des raisons d'ordre géographique et économique un intérêt spécial à maintenir la paix et l'ordre dans certaines provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière Russe, d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan, de l'autre ; et chacun des deux Gouvernements, constatant l'effet nuisible résultant des cas de friction sur place dans leurs relations avec la Perse et entre eux-mêmes, est désireux d'éviter tout motif de collision avec les intérêts spéciaux de chacun d'eux dans les provinces persanes dont il a été fait mention plus haut.

En conséquence il a été décidé par la présente comme suit :

I. La Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets britanniques, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemin de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance, &c.—, au delà d'une ligne partant de Kasri-Chirin, traversant Iezd et Khakh et aboutissant à la frontière Afghane près du bourg de Kuhsan, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région, soutenues par le Gouvernement Russe.

II. La Russie, de son côté, s'engage à ne pas rechercher, pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets russes, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemin de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurances, &c.—, au delà d'une ligne allant de la frontière Afghane par Gazik, Birjand, Kerman et Bender-Abbas et par les frontières de l'Afghanistan et de Béloudjistan, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région, soutenues par le Gouvernement Britannique.

Il est bien entendu que les revenus de toutes les douanes persanes, à l'exception de celles du Farsistan et du Golf Persique, garantissant l'amortissement et les intérêts des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah en Russie, seront affectés au même but que par le passé.

MINUTES.

The preamble seems all right. The difference between "interference" and "collision" is simply that between cause and effect.

In Article I we must ask that the line passing through Yezd and Kakh should terminate at Zulficar, the northernmost extremity of the Perso-Afghan frontier. It can be pointed out that in

the preamble accepted by M. Isvolsky the Russian and British spheres of influence are "contiguous with, or in proximity to, the Russian frontier on the one hand, and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Beluchistan on the other." No mention is made of the Russian sphere being contiguous to the Afghan frontier. Further, since G[rea]t Britain is responsible for the external relations of Afghanistan H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t are responsible for the settlement of all frontier and other questions between Persia and Afghanistan and the introduction of another Power having special interests on the Perso-Afghan frontier could only tend to complicate matters and to defeat the very object of the Convention. On this point there can be no question of yielding.

It is also desirable to demand that the town of Tehran, as the seat of Gov[ernmen]t and as the residence of the foreign Legations should be regarded as a natural "enclave." On this point we could, if necessary, make a graceful concession later.

I think it is desirable, in order to avoid any possible ambiguity in the future that a clause should be inserted by which all existing concessions should be maintained. The transfer of the two telegraph lines may be effected outside the Convention but it must be distinctly understood that the note or notes arranging for the transfer must be signed simultaneously with the Convention. There never was any question of demanding the removal of the Russian bank Agencies in Seistan. We should lose much more by the removal of the Bank of Persia's Agencies from the Russian sphere.

The last paragraph of M. Isvolsky's text is clearly incomplete. I would suggest the following addition :—

Il est également entendu que les revenus des douanes persanes de Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, ainsi que les revenus des pêcheries Caspiennes et des Postes et Telegraphes seront affectés, comme par le passé, au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah avec la Banque Impériale de Perse.

There yet remains the question whether any provision should be made for the eventuality of Russians being placed as controllers of Customs in Seistan in the event of the coupon of the Russian loan being unpaid. The concluding paragraph states that the revenues of the Customs will be devoted to the Russian loans, and we might argue that as long as it can be shown that they are devoted to that purpose it does not matter to the Russians who collects them. It is a risk, though not likely to occur just yet, and the question arises whether we should not announce to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t that, in the event of the necessity arising as foreseen by their loan contracts, we will be ready to undertake the collection and remission to them of the due proportion of the customs revenues in our sphere of influence which may be affected to the Russian loans.

I would suggest that a letter be addressed in this sense to the India Office transmitting a copy of Sir A. Nicolson's despatch and its inclosure, and asking for an early reply.

C. H.

Feb. 26, '07.

Write in this sense to the I[ndia] O[ffice].

E. G.

No. 390.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Foreign Office, February 22, 1907.

Tel. (No. 25.)

D. 9.30 P.M.

We must wait for full text of Russian proposals respecting Persia before entering upon discussion of them. It appears to us however from the summary that they are in principle in accord with what we have already put forward and therefore provide a satisfactory basis for discussion, though we shall probably have certain amendments to propose.

Meanwhile we regard the prospect of an eventual agreement to be such as to justify us in communicating our views about Afghanistan.

You may communicate to M. Isvolsky the draft instructions, which you already have, pointing out to him with regard to direct communication between Russian and Afghan frontier officials that it will be necessary for us to obtain the consent of the Amir beforehand and that we must in consequence know what the Russian views are on this point and how they would propose to carry them out before approaching the Amir. We have hitherto regarded this question of direct

communication between frontier officials as a difficult one owing to the sensitiveness of the Amir and it can only be concluded as part of a general settlement with regard to the region of the Indian frontier, which will give such security on both sides as to prevent small incidents on the Afghan frontier from giving rise to political difficulties or apprehension.

MINUTE.

Send this draft to India Office;⁽¹⁾ we ought to telegraph to Sir A. Nicolson to-morrow if possible.

E. G.
22.2.07.

(¹) [The India Office concurred in these views, February 22, 1907.]

No. 391.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 1, 1907.

F.O. 371/369.
Tel. (No. 37.)

D. 3.15 P.M.
R. 4.30 P.M.

Persia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed to me last night his anxiety as to the situation, and intimated that the Shah was desirous that Russian Government should take some measures on the frontier, as the most disturbed districts were adjoining the Caucasus. Minister for Foreign Affairs said that Russian Government had already taken steps to prevent revolutionaries from crossing the Caucasus into Persian territory. He added that he would consult with military authorities as to what further measures were possible. He repeated his intention of keeping measures within the narrowest possible limits and doing nothing without previous consultation with His Majesty's Government.

He thought that it would be well if the two Governments were to agree beforehand upon measures to be taken respectively in case events necessitated action.

I told him that all we could do would be to protect British subjects in Gulf ports. He said that he would let me know later what Russian Government proposed, and then he would like to be acquainted with views of His Majesty's Government. He said that he had heard that proposed national banks wished to take all customs revenues, and this should not be permitted.

I agreed with him, but said that I had no positive information on the subject.
(Sent to Tehran.)

No. 392.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 8, 1907.

F.O. 371/369.
Tel. (No. 41.)

D. 4.35 P.M.
R. 6 P.M.

Persia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has sent me a Memorandum, stating that Russian and British Ministers have decided to send to their Governments a statement—

1. That in spite of appearance of outward calm, there are signs of a dangerous movement against the Dynasty and Europeans.

2. That the movement against the Shah shows itself in persistent reports that he wishes to dismiss Assembly, which is organizing a militia.
3. That the movement against Europeans is not against individuals or Legations, but is directed to the removal of foreigners from Persian service, and to preventing them from obtaining concession in Persia.
4. That in view of the tendencies of the Assembly, Russia and Great Britain would be justified in declaring to Persian Government that, while carefully avoiding any intervention in the internal affairs of Persia, the two Powers nevertheless will not permit their interests to be injured in any respect whatever.

Russian Government consider that there is no doubt that the two Representatives are correct in their conclusions, and that it would be desirable that Russian and British Ministers should make simultaneously an identic declaration to the Persian Government in the above sense.

Russian Government will gladly know views of His Majesty's Government and, if latter have no objections, instructions will be sent to Russian Minister to concert with his British colleague as to the proposed step.

(Sent to Tehran.)

No. 393.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/369.

Tel. (No. 30.)

Foreign Office, March 8, 1907.

D. 5'35 P.M.

Your desp[atch] No. 101.⁽¹⁾
Persian Convention.

Preamble of draft proposed by Russian Gov[ernment] is satisfactory and may be accepted.

Art[icle] 1. As to Russian line, we note that preamble speaks of British and Russian spheres of influence as "contiguous with or in proximity to Russian frontier on the one hand and frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan on the other" and that no mention is made of Russian sphere being contiguous with Afghan frontier. Further, as we are responsible for the external relations of Afghanistan and are obliged, not only by treaty with the Amir but also by Art[icle] 6 of the Persian Treaty of March 4, 1857, to undertake the settlement of all frontier and other questions arising between Persia and Afghanistan, the introduction of another Power having special interests on the Perso-Afghan frontier would tend to complicate matters and defeat the very object of this Convention. It is therefore most important that no part of that frontier should lie within the Russian sphere. We would have included the whole frontier within our sphere if we had contemplated the possibility of the Russian Gov[ernment] putting forward their present claim, but we wished to make our sphere as small as possible. You should therefore ask that Russian line should terminate at Zulfikar on northernmost extremity of Afghan frontier. There can be no question of yielding on this point.

We had originally intended to demand that town of Tehran, as the capital and seat of foreign Legations, should form a neutral enclave in the Russian sphere. We are now however, prepared to make a most important concession by waiving this point on the understanding that, in consideration of the greatly increased influence which may accrue to Russia by the inclusion of the town in her sphere, she will undertake not to oppose, without previous agreement with us, the grant to British subjects as to those of third powers, of concessions in the neutral zone. It would

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 431-2, No. 389.]

be manifestly unfair that increased prestige at Tehran should be used on the spot there to our detriment in the neutral zone, which is governed like the rest of Persia from Tehran.

Art[icle] 2. We consider that a clause should be inserted providing for the maintenance of all "existing concessions."

We have no objection to effecting the transfer of the two telegraph lines by an exchange of notes outside the Convention, provided that it is distinctly understood that the notes arranging for the transfer should be signed at the same time as the Convention itself and that this is an indispensable condition of the signature of the Convention.

We have no intention of demanding the removal of the agencies of the Russian bank in Seistan which would entail that of the agencies of the Bank of Persia in the Russian spheres and would cost us more than we should gain by it.

The last paragraph of the Russian text appears to us incomplete and we suggest the following addition:—

"It is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian customs of Farsistan and the Persian Gulf as well as those of the Caspian fisheries and of the Posts and Telegraphs, shall be devoted, as in the past, to the service of the loans concluded by the Gov[ernmen]t of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia."

There remains the question of providing for the eventuality of Russians being placed as controllers of customs in Seistan in consequence of the non-payment of the coupon of the Russian loan. We consider that so long as it can be shown that the revenues of the customs are devoted to the service of those loans (as stated in the last paragraph of the Russian draft) it does not matter to the Russians by whom they are collected. You are therefore authorised to announce to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t that, in the event of the necessity arising, as foreseen by their loan contracts, we are ready to undertake the collection and remission to them of the due proportion of the customs revenues in our sphere of influence which may be affected to the Russian loans if the Russian Gov[ernmen]t will agree to a similar arrangement regarding revenues pledged to British loans within the Russian sphere.

No. 394.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/369.

Foreign Office, March 9, 1907.

Tel. (No. 34.)

D. 4'30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 41.⁽¹⁾

Persia. Proposed identic declaration.

The situation is difficult, as we do not want to offend the Russian Gov[ernmen]t at the present moment by refusing to take action as they suggest. At the same time there can be no doubt that the less we have to do with the Persian Gov[ernmen]t just now, the better for us, as premature or undue interference must tend to arouse popular feeling against us in the country.

You should therefore inform the Russian Gov[ernmen]t that at present we are not apprehensive of danger to foreign subjects, nor have we had any intimation from Sir C. Spring-Rice that a general declaration would be beneficial, but that we realise the hostile attitude towards foreign enterprise assumed by the Persian Assembly, and that, while avoiding any semblance of unprovoked intervention in internal affairs, we are in favour of the cooperation of the two Gov[ernmen]ts in

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 434-5, No. 392.]

Persia for the mutual protection of their respective interests whenever they may be menaced.

We do not think that a joint declaration, as suggested, would be politic at the present moment but we consider that, in order to show the community of our action and interests, we might press the Persian Gov[ernmen]t for a reply to the joint enquiry made by the two Legations as to the steps to be taken for the payment of the coupons of the loans (see my tel[egram] No. 17 repeating my tel[egram] No. 17 to Sir C. Spring-Rice⁽²⁾).

Sent to Tehran.

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 395.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 125.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 10, 1907.

R. March 18, 1907.

I called on M. Isvolsky this morning, and said that I had brought with me a paper embodying certain amendments which His Majesty's Government desired to see introduced into the Draft Convention in regard to Persia, which the Russian Government had lately communicated to me.⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to enclose the copy of an *Aide Mémoire* which I left with His Excellency after our conversation had concluded.

I informed M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government accepted the preamble of the Draft Convention. In regard to the tracing of the Russian line as laid down in the Draft Convention, I wished to amplify somewhat the observations which I had made to him recently on that point. He would see that in the preamble of the Russian Draft Convention it was stated that the districts in which Russia and Great Britain had special interests were those respectively bordering on or contiguous with the Russian frontier, and the frontier of Afghanistan and Belouchistan. His Majesty's Government held the same views and had naturally considered that the Russian zone would not include any portion of the Afghan frontier, but if the Russian line were to terminate at a point on the Afghan frontier near to Kushan [Kuh-san], a portion of that frontier would come within the Russian zone. As I had explained to him at my last interview on the 7th instant, such an arrangement would necessarily lead to complications. We were bound by treaty both with Afghanistan and with Persia to undertake the settlement of all frontier and other questions arising between those two Countries, and it was needless for me to dwell upon the difficulties which would arise if a third Power were to have special interests on the Perso-Afghan frontier. Our Convention had in view the removal of all possible causes of friction, but if the Russian line were left as was suggested in the Russian Draft Convention there would be a continual danger of difficulties arising. I said that I would repeat what I had said on the 7th instant, and that was that the Russian line should run from Kakhk to Zulficar, and thus obviate any of those serious risks to which I had alluded. I must tell him that my Government attached extreme importance to this matter, and, as I had said on the 7th instant, it was of small importance to Russia but of serious import to us, and that very possibly the Russian Government had overlooked the considerations which I urged upon him.

M. Isvolsky said that he recollected my observations on the 7th instant, and could repeat the remark that he had not himself drawn the line, and that he would examine carefully, in the light of my remarks, the modifications which I proposed. I said that I must impress on him that the rectification which I had requested was an essential one.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 432-3, No. 389, *encl.*]

I think that M. Isvolsky clearly saw the force of my observations, and, though he would not commit himself, I think that he will urge upon his advisers to accept the rectification which is desired.

I told M. Isvolsky that there was another question connected with the Russian zone on which I wished to speak to him. The Russian zone included Tehran, the capital of Persia, and I must tell him frankly that if my Government were to agree that the capital of the Kingdom were to be within the districts in which Russia was recognised as having special interests, a great increase of influence would accrue to the Russian Government. Indeed my Government had originally intended to propose that Tehran should form a neutral enclave in the Russian zone, but as they were sincerely desirous of arriving at a friendly settlement, they were prepared to make a most important concession and abandon their intention, but it must be on the understanding that Russia engaged not to oppose, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, any grant of concessions in the neutral zones of Persia to British subjects or to those of third Powers.

M. Isvolsky enquired whether the understanding which I suggested was to be unilateral on the part of Russia, or whether Great Britain would be disposed to give a similar engagement. I told him that I had no instructions on that point, but I would mention his observation to you. His Excellency then said that he did not quite grasp the reason for demanding the engagement from Russia, nor did he see if Tehran were within the Russian zone the political situation would be greatly altered from that which existed. Our respective zones were, he observed, demarcated with a view of preventing either party from interfering within the zones of the other, a species of self-denying ordinance; but why should anything be specially said as to other portions of Persia outside the zones? The neutral zones would, he understood, be left open to all parties, and in his view both Russia and Great Britain should preserve entire liberty of action in respect to them. I told M. Isvolsky that the concession which we were prepared to make in including Tehran within the Russian zone practically amounted to a recognition that Russia had a special interest, and consequently a special position in the capital, and this concession was a very great one. If Russia had a special position she would eventually have special influence, perhaps I might say a predominant influence, which was not the case at present. Such an influence might, and we must look into the future, hereafter be employed, I did not say that it would be, but it might be employed, in opposing British concessions in the neutral zones. Russia would be placed in an admirable position for exercising such opposition, and we were bound to take securities, in view of any future interests we might wish to acquire in the neutral zones, that her influence and her special position should not be utilized to the detriment of those interests. Tehran governed Persia, and it was this fact that we must bear in mind for the future. M. Isvolsky seemed to understand this point of view, as he remarked that he still did not comprehend why Russia should be asked to debar herself from opposing any concessions to third Powers, which if granted might prove injurious to Russian commercial interests. His Excellency took up a map and pointed out to me how it might be possible for Germany for instance, to endeavour to secure branch lines from the Bagdad railway into the neutral zones. Was Russia to be prevented, if she thought such concessions detrimental to her interests, from raising objections to them? I observed that we did not ask that Russia should be excluded from absolutely raising objections or opposition. We had carefully inserted the clause "without previous arrangement with Great Britain."

His Excellency said that he quite understood that, but suppose that Russia wished to oppose the grant of a concession to a third Power, while Great Britain was in favour of such a grant: a conflict of opinion would immediately arise, not only between Russia and Great Britain, but also with the third Power, which would cause a troublesome and perplexing situation. As regards third Powers, he was not in favour of their being specially mentioned. I said that I was then to understand

that he desired a reciprocal arrangement between Great Britain and Russia not to oppose the grant in the neutral zones of concessions either to Great Britain or Russia as the case might be, and that we should omit all reference to third Powers. M. Isvolsky said that at first sight this was his personal view, but he begged me not to take it as a settled opinion. He must ask for a little time to study the question before pronouncing on it. I said that of course I had no wish to bind him in any way, and I then proceeded to Article II.

I said that we should like a clause inserted that existing concessions in the respective zones of Great Britain and Russia should be maintained. This, I observed, did not affect the transfer to Russian and British control respectively of the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Nasratabad telegraph lines. This transfer should be effected by an exchange of Notes which must be signed simultaneously with the signature of the Convention. M. Isvolsky made no remarks on this proposal; and I then let him read the two concluding paragraphs of the *Aide-mémoire* to which I said presumably no objection would be raised.

His Excellency thanked me for the communication, and said that he would study it carefully, and that he would examine it with the sincerest desire of arriving at an agreement. He hoped to give me a reply to the points which I had raised at no distant date.

Before leaving M. Isvolsky I said that I hoped that he would shortly let me have the views of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan, as it would be necessary after we had received them that we should consult with the Ameer, and this would take a little time. His Excellency said that he was occupying himself with this question, which was one of importance, and he promised to let me have a reply without undue delay, but it was not a matter which could be settled in a few days. I remarked that I hoped that we should be able to arrange matters before I took my summer holiday about the end of June. M. Isvolsky said he had every hope that there would be no difficulty in our reaching a conclusion before that date.

I telegraphed a short summary of my conversation and of my impressions in my telegram No. 42 of to-day's date.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 395.

Aide-mémoire.

Draft Convention in regard to Persia communicated by the Imperial Russian Government.

St. Petersburg, March 10, 1907.

Preamble.

His Britannic Majesty's Government accept the Preamble.

ARTICLE I.

The Draft Convention proposes that the Russian line should run from "Kasri Chirin traversant Isfahan, Yesd et Kakh et aboutissant à la frontière Afghane près du bourg de Kuhsan." His Majesty's Embassy begs to point out that in the preamble it is stated that "les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne et Russie reconnaissent mutuellement que chacun d'eux . . . a un intérêt spécial de maintenir la paix et l'ordre dans certaines provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière Russe d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et de Beloudjistan de l'autre . . ." It was therefore not understood that Russia desired that a portion of her zone should be contiguous with Afghan territory, as

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

would be the case if her line terminated at the point mentioned in the Draft Convention. Moreover Great Britain is responsible for the external relations of Afghanistan and is obliged not only by treaty with the Ameer but also by Article VI of the Persian Treaty of 1857 to undertake the settlement of all frontier and other questions arising between Persia and Afghanistan. It is, therefore, clear that the introduction of another Power having special interests on the Perso-Afghan frontier would tend to complicate matters and defeat the only object of the Convention.

His Majesty's Embassy is therefore instructed to request that the Russian line should terminate at Zulficar on the northernmost extremity of Afghanistan and not at a point on the Afghan frontier near Kuhsan. His Majesty's Embassy desires to say that His Majesty's Government attach great importance to this matter.

His Majesty's Embassy wishes to inform the Imperial Russian Government that His Majesty's Government originally intended to request that the town of Teheran, as the capital and seat of the Legations, should form a neutral enclave in the Russian zone. His Majesty's Government are however prepared to make a most important concession by waiving this point; but on the understanding that Russia undertakes not to oppose, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, any grant of concessions in the neutral zones of Persia to British subjects or to those of third Powers. His Majesty's Embassy does not doubt that the Imperial Russian Government will have no difficulty in giving the undertaking above mentioned.

ARTICLE II.

His Majesty's Embassy would wish that a clause be inserted stating that all existing concessions are maintained. At the same time His Majesty's Embassy requests that the control of the Telegraph line from Meshed to Nasratabad be transferred to Great Britain and is ready to agree that the control over the Tehran-Meshed telegraph line be transferred to Russia. The transfer shall be effected by an exchange of notes, to be signed simultaneously with the Convention.

His Majesty's Embassy desires that the last paragraph of Article II be amplified; and suggests the following addition should be made "it is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian customs of Farsistan and the Persian Gulf as well as those of the Caspian Fisheries and of posts and telegraphs shall be devoted as in the past to the service of loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia."

His Majesty's Embassy desires to mention one more point. If there be any question of non-payment of coupons and of the possibility of controllers being established over customs or other pledged revenues in the respective zones, Great Britain would be prepared to undertake the collection and remission to Russia of the due proportion of customs revenues which may be affected to Russian loans in the British zone, if the Imperial Government would agree to a similar arrangement as regards the revenues in the Russian zone which may be pledged to British loans.

St. Petersburg, February 25/March 10, 1907.

MINUTE.

The mem[orandum] is all right with the exception of the sentence relating to the concessions of third parties in the neutral zone which has since been corrected by telegraph.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 396.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/369.

Tel. (No. 35.)

Foreign Office, March 11, 1907

D. 3.53 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 42.⁽¹⁾ Persian Convention.

We are only interested that British Concessions should not be opposed in neutral zone without previous agreement with us and would be ready to give a reciprocal engagement. We would be therefore satisfied with the first sentence of the paragraph number 3 of the impressions derived from your conversation with M. Isvolsky.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It gives Sir A. Nicolson's impressions, derived from conversation with M. Isvolski, on the probable attitude of the Russian Government to the Persian Convention. The first part of the telegram considers agreement likely. Paragraph 3 however runs as follows: "That they will agree to not opposing Concessions in neutral zones, if engagement is reciprocal and limited to British and Russian Concessions. He does not like to tie his hands as to not opposing Concessions to third Parties, though I pointed out that he was not debarred from opposing such Concessions if he came to a previous arrangement with us."]

No. 397.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 132.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 13, 1907.

R. March 13, 1907.

I informed M. Isvolsky to-day that with reference to the grant of concessions to third Powers in the neutral zones of Persia, my Government would be satisfied if an undertaking were given by the Russian Government that they would not, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, oppose British concessions in the above-mentioned localities. We, on the other hand, would if the Russian Government so desired it, be willing to give a similar engagement as regards Russian concessions. M. Isvolsky seemed to be quite in accord with such an arrangement, and said that he hoped to be very shortly in a position to communicate a reply to the observations which I had handed to him on the Russian Draft Convention. He added that the military authorities were examining the question as to the Russian line terminating at Zulficar, but he did not appear to consider that there would be any difficulty in arranging that point in accordance with the desires of His Majesty's Government.

I venture to submit for your consideration a rough draft of an annexe [*sic*] to the Convention with respect to the transfer of the control over the two telegraph lines between Meshed and Tehran and Meshed and Nasratabad. I think that it would be well if the Draft Annexe were to be communicated to Mr. Isvolsky instead of awaiting a proposal from the Russian Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 397.

Draft Annex to the Convention as to Persia in regard to the transfer of the control over the telegraph lines between Tehran and Meshed and between Meshed and Nasratabad.

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia having signed this day a Convention in respect to their interests in Persia, hereby agree that the supervision (control) of the telegraph line between Teheran and Meshed as at present exercised by the British telegraph service shall be transferred to the Russian telegraph service

and that the supervision (control) of the telegraph line between Meshed and Nasratabad as at present exercised by the Russian telegraph service shall be transferred to the British telegraph service. All arrangements whatsoever which may have been made with the Persian telegraph Administration as to the upkeep and general working of the two telegraph lines in question shall be taken over by the Russian and British telegraph services respectively. The British signallers, guards and other British employés on the telegraph line between Teheran and Meshed and the Russian signallers, guards and other Russian employés on the telegraph line between Meshed and Nasratabad shall be respectively withdrawn on the transfer of the supervision (control) of the two lines being effected.

No. 398.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 141.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 16, 1907.

R. April 2, 1907.

I notice that in the Russian Draft Convention regarding Persia, besides specifying the nature of the concessions which each Power should abstain from seeking in the zone of the other, the Russian Government have stated that

“Great Britain on her part engages not to seek for her own account, or on behalf of

Russia
British subjects, or in favour of subjects of third Powers any concessions, etc.”
Russian

The words underlined are an interpolation which, perhaps, you may have wished to see retained.

Although M. Isvolsky objected to the mention of third Powers when dealing with the attitude which the two Governments should respectively assume towards concessions and in the neutral zones of Persia. I venture to submit that it might be desirable to maintain the reference to third Powers in treating of the British and Russian zones, as it would exclude the possibility of the Russian Government hereafter favouring the introduction of foreign enterprise into the British zone. I trust you will forgive me for bringing this point to your notice, and doubtless it had already been remarked by you, but I desire to be quite sure that you admit the addendum.

With respect to the “neutral zones,” I would propose to submit to M. Isvolsky the following Draft, or words to the same effect, of an Article III.

“Russia, on her part, further engages not to oppose, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, any grant of concessions to British subjects in the regions of Persia outside of the lines mentioned in Articles I and II. Great Britain undertakes a similar engagement as regards the grant of concessions to Russian subjects in the afore-mentioned regions of Persia.

“All the existing concessions within the lines mentioned in Articles I and II are maintained.”

It might, perhaps, be well to avoid any mention in the Convention of “zones” or “spheres,” and I have therefore ventured to suggest the above wording.

Article IV would refer to the customs and other pledged revenues, and I submit the following as a Draft for Article V.

“If there should be any question of the non-payment of coupons, and of the possibility of controllers being established over customs or other pledged revenues in the regions within the lines mentioned in Article II, Great Britain would be prepared to undertake the collection and remission to Russia of the

due proportion of such revenues as may be affected to the service of loans contracted by the Government of the Shah in Russia.

"In similar circumstances, as regards customs and other pledged revenues in the regions within the line mentioned in Article I, Russia would be prepared to undertake the collection and remission of the due proportion of such revenues as may be affected to the service of loans contracted by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia."

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 399.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 153.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 16, 1907.

I lately expressed to the French Amb[assado]r the desire that, in view of the agreement concluded between Great Britain and Russia relative to advances to the Persian Gov[ernmen]t, the French Gov[ernmen]t should discourage French banks from lending money to Persia at least without the previous concurrence of H[is] M[ajesty's] and the Russian Gov[ernmen]ts.

On the 8th inst[ant] M. Cambon called at this Office and left a memorandum⁽¹⁾ to the effect that the French Gov[ernmen]t had received this request with favour and that the Minister of Finance would take such steps as might be possible in French financial circles to give effect to my desire.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 400.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 17, 1907.

F.O. 371/369.

Tel. (No. 46.)

D. 8 P.M.

R. 10-30 P.M.

Persia Convention.

In Articles I and II I notice that in Russian text Great Britain and Russia are respectively to engage not to support concessions in favour of subjects of third Powers in the zone of the other. Perhaps you would wish this reference to the third parties maintained as regards our special zones, as it would preclude Russia from favouring foreign enterprise in our zone. As we did not mention it in our text, I venture to inquire.

No. 401.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/369.

Tel. (No. 39.)

Foreign Office, March 18, 1907.

Y[ou]r tel[egram] No. 46. Persia Convention.

We wish reference to third parties maintained as regards concession in our respective special zones, as stated in Art[icle]s 1 and 2 of Russian text.

No. 402.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/369.

Foreign Office, March 20, 1907.

Tel. (No. 30.)

D. 1.40 p.m.

Your tel[egram] No. 58. Secret.⁽¹⁾

Russian Gov[ernmen]t would be unlikely to consent to insertion in Agreement of clause such as you suggest.

I have requested Sir A. Nicolson to ascertain from Russian Gov[ernmen]t what steps they would be prepared to take on behalf of the Zil in case of necessity and whether they would be willing to give either to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] or to the Zil himself any assurances on the subject.

It would be better to say nothing to the Zil till we learn the result of these enquiries.

(¹) [Not reproduced. This telegram asked for a pledge from the Russian Government that the Zill-es-Sultan, who had worked for British interests, should not suffer if Ispahan came under Russian influence.]

No. 403.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

St. Petersburg, D. March 25, 1907.

(No. 156.)

R. April 2, 1907.

Sir,

M. Isvolsky told me this morning that he was now in a position to communicate to me the measures which the Russian Government propose to adopt, should the situation in Persia become acute, for the protection of Russian interests in that country. The main points, to his mind, were to safeguard that the customs revenues pledged to the service of the Russian loans were not diverted from their purpose; and also to show by a practical demonstration that Russia would not permit her interests to be endangered. The Russian Government were fully determined to abstain from all intervention in the internal affairs, and would take no steps unless the circumstances imperatively called for some action. At the same time, it was well to be prepared for contingences, and he wished to hand me a *Pro Memorîâ*, of which I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy, detailing the measures which were contemplated. He wished to act in complete accord with His Majesty's Government in all matters concerning Persia, and he would, therefore, be glad to know what steps they proposed to take on their side. I would observe that the measures proposed by the Russian Government were limited, in case of necessity, to the occupation of certain customs in the north of Persia. He asked me to tell him my opinion as to the steps which the Russian Government proposed to take, and whether I thought that they would create a salutary impression on the Persian population.

I told His Excellency that I was a little puzzled to give an opinion, and that I would prefer to await your views. Personally it seemed to me that the measures would be practical for the purposes for which they were intended and I hoped that they would, if employed, impress the population. Sir C. Spring-Rice, who was on the spot, was, I knew, of opinion that abstention should be observed to the last possible moment, and that half-measures, if any measures were required, would do more harm than good.

M. Isvolsky said he could assure me, as he had done on previous occasions, that nothing but urgent necessity would induce the Russian Government to take any measures at all. What, he enquired, did I think that my Government would

do? I said that I believed that we were disposed to do no more than afford protection to the southern ports. Would we, he asked, also occupy customs-houses? I said I could give him no reply to that point, but that doubtless I would receive your views when you had studied the memorandum which he had given me.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 403.

Pro-memoriâ.

La situation dans les provinces septentrionales de la Perse devenant de plus en plus inquiétante, le Gouvernement Impérial a dû envisager la possibilité d'un état de choses tel qu'il constituerait une menace directe aux intérêts de la Russie et nécessiterait la mise à exécution de mesures effectives pour la sauvegarde de ces intérêts.

Après mûre réflexion il a été reconnu que dans le cas de besoin urgent il y aurait lieu à l'occupation *manu militari* de quelques douanes persanes sur notre frontière de terre, ainsi que sur le littoral de la mer Caspienne, afin de garantir le service régulier de l'amortissement des obligations pécuniaires du Gouvernement Persan envers la Russie. Les points que nous nous proposons d'occuper éventuellement seraient Djoulfa, Astara, Enzeli, Mechedesser et Bender Ghiaz; à cet effet des contingents de troupes se tiendront prêts pour être dirigés sur les points indiqués, dès que la nécessité se présentera.

Le Gouvernement Impérial se fait un devoir d'en informer au préalable le Cabinet de Londres en le priant de vouloir bien lui communiquer les décisions que l'Angleterre croira nécessaire de prendre de son côté, en vue d'établir un accord complet dans l'action des deux puissances.

No. 404.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 173.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 2, 1907.

R. April 15, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith, a private letter which I received this afternoon from M. Isvolsky enclosing a *Pro Memoriâ* embodying the reply of the Russian Government to the Memorandum which I communicated to His Excellency on the 10th of March,⁽²⁾ and of which I forwarded a copy in my despatch No. 125 of the same date, in regard to the Convention which it is proposed to conclude with reference to the respective interests of Great Britain and Russia in Persia.

The chief point, as M. Isvolsky observes, is that the Russian Government would be prepared to meet the wishes of His Majesty's Government that the Russian line should terminate at Zulficar, when they have received certain explanations on one or two points. It is true that the Russian reply is a little more guarded than I have stated, but I think that it can be taken for granted that in principle they have acceded to our request on that important point.

I understand that the remarks made in point 2 of the *Pro Memoriâ* in regard to concessions in the neutral zones, are merely mentioned in order to have consigned to writing the verbal assurances which I gave to M. Isvolsky on March 13, and which I reported in my despatch No. 132 of that date.⁽³⁾ I presume that there will

⁽¹⁾ [Tel. No. 57 from Sir A. Nicolson of April 2, 1907, D. 9 P.M., R. 10.15 P.M., gave a summary of this despatch.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 439-40, No. 395, *encl.*]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 441, No. 397.]

be no objection to adopting this course when a reply is given to the *Pro Memoria* which I am transmitting.

No mention is made of the transfer of the telegraph lines, or of the maintenance of the existing concessions, or as to the addendum requested to Article II of the Russian Draft Convention as to the revenues which are pledged to the services of British loans to Persia. I do not anticipate any difficulty on those points.

I telegraphed the substance of the *Pro Memoria* in my telegram No. 57 of to-day's date.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 404.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

April 2, 1907.

Je m'empresse de vous faire tenir ci-joint notre *pro-memoria* en réponse à votre dernière communication au sujet de la Perse. Ce n'est pas encore une réponse définitive mais, comme vous verrez, sur le point principal nous sommes prêts à aller au devant de vos désirs.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

ISVOLSKY.

Enclosure 2 in No. 404.

Pro-Memoria communicated by Russian Government.

St. Petersburg, April 2, 1907.

Vu l'importance majeure que le Gouv[ernemen]t Anglais attache à ce que la ligne frontière de la sphère d'influence présumée de la Russie en Perse aboutisse non pas à Kuhsan, mais à Zulficar, et afin de donner au Cabinet de St. James une preuve indiscutable de sa ferme décision d'arriver à une entente solide entre les deux Etats, le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial pourrait se déclarer prêt à aller au devant de ce désir. Néanmoins, avant de donner une réponse définitive tant sur ce sujet que sur les autres questions touchées dans l'aide-mémoire anglais du 25 février/10 mars, le Ministère Impérial désirerait éclaircir les points suivants des propositions contenues dans cet aide-mémoire :—

1. L'Ambassade Britannique y exprime le désir que dans le cas de non-paiement des coupons des emprunts persans et de l'institution d'un contrôle sur les douanes ou sur d'autres sources de revenus, engagées dans les zones respectives, la Grande Bretagne se charge de percevoir et de verser à la Russie les sommes qui lui seraient dues sur les revenus dans la sphère anglaise affectés à l'amortissement des emprunts conclus en Russie, et que la Russie, de son côté, prenne un engagement analogue en ce qui regarde les revenus dans la sphère russe affectés aux paiements à faire à l'Angleterre. A ce propos il est à prendre en considération que le droit de contrôle sur les douanes persanes en cas d'irrégularités dans l'amortissement des emprunts conclus en Russie appartient à cet état en vertu d'un contrat passé avec le Gouv[ernemen]t Persan. Il est indispensable, en conséquence, de résoudre au préalable la question de savoir si ce droit peut être cédé à d'autres, ou bien si le Gouv[ernemen]t Persan peut se croire fondé à protester contre une pareille transaction. En outre, le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial ne saurait se prononcer définitivement dans cette question avant d'être renseigné d'une façon exacte sur les droits acquis en Perse sous ce rapport par le Gouv[ernemen]t Anglais, afin de pouvoir se former une idée nette des obligations qu'il assumerait en acceptant la dite transaction.

2. L'Ambassade suggère que le Gouv[ernemen]t Russe s'engage à ne pas s'opposer, sans s'être préalablement entendu avec le Gouv[ernemen]t Anglais, à ce que des concessions quelconques soient données dans la zone neutre à des sujets britanniques ou à ceux de Puissances tierces. La rédaction de cette clause étant de nature à donner lieu à des interprétations différentes, il serait peut-être désirable d'omettre complètement dans ce passage les mots qui se rapportent aux sujets de Puissances tierces, ainsi que l'a proposé verbalement Sir Arthur Nicolson. Il va de soi, du reste, que la Russie ne pourrait prendre un pareil engagement qu'à titre de réciprocité de la part de l'Angleterre.

MINUTE.

Nothing more will be done till we get the Russian views as to Afghanistan. We may then have to consider each question in the light of the other.

E. G.

No. 405.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 177.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 4, 1907.

R. April 15, 1907.

I told M. Isvolsky yesterday that I had telegraphed to you the substance of the *Pro Memoriâ* which he had communicated to me in regard to Persia, and of which I had forwarded a copy in my despatch No. 173 of the 2nd instant,⁽¹⁾ and that I was glad to see that in principle the Russian Government were prepared to accept the modification which His Majesty's Government desired in respect to the tracing of the Russian line. His Excellency observed that as the chief point was practically arranged, he trusted that there would be no difficulty as to the other points raised in the Russian *Pro Memoriâ* and which were of a technical nature. I would doubtless understand that he had not been able to give a definite reply as to the terminus of the Russian line until all other points were cleared up. He added that he was examining the best method for arranging the question of the telegraph lines, and he appeared to have understood that a transfer was the sole solution. I do not anticipate that any difficulty will arise on that point.

I have &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 406.

Foreign Office to India Office.

F.O. 371/369.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 6, 1907.

With ref[erence] to previous correspondence relative to the proposed Anglo-Russian Agreement with regard to Persia now in course of negotiation, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to tr[ansmit] to you herewith copy of a despatch from H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at St. Petersburg containing certain observations and suggestions which H[is] E[xcellency] desires to offer in connexion with the draft Convention submitted by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, copy of which formed the enclosure in my letter of Feb[ruary] 28.⁽¹⁾

With regard to the first paragraph of Sir A. Nicolson's despatch, I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey has already informed H[is] E[xcellency] that H[is] M[ajesty's]

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 432-3, No. 389, *encl.* and *min.*]

G[overnment] desire the reference to third parties as regards concessions in the British and Russian special zones to be maintained. This information, which was conveyed to Sir A. Nicolson in Sir E. Grey's tel[egram] No. 39 of the 18th ult[imo], had not reached H[is] E[xcellency] at the time when his despatch was written. A copy of the telegram in question is enclosed.⁽²⁾

On the 11th ult[imo] Sir E. Grey addressed a tel[egram] to Sir A. Nicolson (No. 35),⁽³⁾ copy of which was forwarded to you the same day, stating that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] were only interested that British concessions should not be opposed in the neutral zone without previous agreement with them, and that they were willing to give a reciprocal engagement on this point.

The draft of an Art[icle] III proposed by Sir A. Nicolson is intended to give effect to the view of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] on this question. Sir E. Grey considers it satisfactory in principle, but would prefer to substitute the words "same regions" for the words "afore-mentioned regions of Persia" at the end of the first paragraph, which would, in his opinion, improve the language of the Article without altering its sense.

He would accordingly propose, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Secretary Morley, to authorise Sir A. Nicolson to submit this draft to the Russian Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] with the slight verbal alteration above indicated.

Sir E. Grey concurs in Sir A. Nicolson's view that it would be well to omit from the text of the proposed Agreement any specific reference to "zones" or "spheres."

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that Sir A. Nicolson's proposed draft of an Article V represents, in principle, the views of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] on the point with which it deals. He would prefer, however, to omit from it any mention of the possible establishment of controllers of the one nationality over customs or pledged revenues in the sphere of the other Power, a contingency for which specific provision is made in the loan agreements concluded by the Imperial Bank of Persia with the Persian Gov[ernment]. He would further suggest that the idea embodied in the article would be more precisely expressed if the following wording were substituted for that submitted by Sir A. Nicolson:—

"In case of the non-payment of the interest on loans contracted by the Gov[ernment] of the Shah in Russia, Great Britain would be prepared to undertake the collection and remission to the Russian Gov[ernment] of the due proportion of the customs receipts or other revenues pledged to the service of such loans in the regions within the lines mentioned in Art[icle] II.

"In similar circumstances, Russia would be prepared to undertake the collection and remission to His Britannic Majesty's Gov[ernment] of the due proportion of the customs receipts or other revenues pledged to the service of the loans, contracted by the Gov[ernment] of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia, in the region within the lines mentioned in Art[icle] I."

Sir E. Grey proposes, if Mr. Morley should see no objection, to authorise Sir A. Nicolson to submit to M. Isvolski the draft of an article in these terms.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[ORST]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 443, No. 401.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 441, No. 396.]

No. 407.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 182.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 7, 1907.

R. April 15, 1907.

I had the honour to receive your despatch No. 136 of the 2nd instant, transmitting copy of a letter from the Admiralty in regard to the measures which might be taken for the protection of British interests in the Persian Gulf.⁽¹⁾ As M. Isvolsky will doubtless expect a reply in writing to the *Aide Mémoire* which he communicated to me, and a copy of which I transmitted in my despatch No. 156 of March 25,⁽²⁾ I venture to enclose the Draft of an *Aide Mémoire* which I might hand to His Excellency should its terms meet with your approval. I think that it would be unnecessary to enumerate the ports to which ships of war might be despatched, and I have therefore given a very general statement on that head. I have also not specified the character of the protective measures, but should M. Isvolsky again ask me if His Majesty's Government would, in case of necessity, be prepared to seize Customs Houses, I would propose to reply that the naval commanders would be allowed latitude as to the nature of protection which the circumstances might require and would be authorized to adopt that which seemed to them to be the most practicable and feasible.

I should be grateful if you would kindly inform me by telegraph of your views as to my draft *Aide Mémoire*, and of any modifications which you would desire me to introduce.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 407.

Aide-mémoire for communication to the Russian Government.

His Majesty's Embassy had the honour to receive the *Aide Mémoire* which the Imperial Russian Gov[ernmen]t were good enough to communicate on the 12/25 March 1907 in regard to the measures which in case of urgent necessity would be taken for the protection of Russian interests in Persia. The Imperial Russian Government requested to be informed of the measures which His Majesty's Government might be disposed, in similar circumstances, to adopt.

His Majesty's Embassy begs leave to state that in case of serious emergency and in the event of the lives and interests of British subjects being gravely endangered, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to despatch ships of war to the southern ports of Persia, and in the Persian Gulf to afford such measures of protection as the circumstances might demand. His Majesty's Embassy understands that the Imperial Russian Government are in accord with His Majesty's Government that active measures should, if possible, be avoided and only adopted in circumstances of serious urgency and after previous communication between the two Governments.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 444-5, No. 403, and *encl.*]

No. 408.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 190.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 10, 1907.

R. April 15, 1907.

I enquired of M. Isvolsky to-day whether he could tell me if the Russian Government would be disposed to give some assurances with the object of

tranquillising the mind of the Zil-es-Sultan as to his future. His Excellency said that the Russian Government were quite prepared to convey to His Highness assurances similar to those which I had mentioned to him in my private letter of the 12/25 March, and a copy of which I had the honour to enclose in my despatch No. 155 of the same date.⁽¹⁾ M. Isvolsky added that the assurances would be conveyed direct to the Zil-es-Sultan. I asked him if I could take his communication as a settled matter, and His Excellency replied in the affirmative.

I telegraphed the above to you in my telegram No. 62 of to-day's date.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. *cp. supra*, p. 444, No. 402 and *note*. Despatch No. 155 of March 25 reported an interview between Sir A. Nicolson and M. Isvolski, with reference to the position of the Zil-es-Sultan. At M. Isvolski's request Sir A. Nicolson addressed to him the following private letter :

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

Mon cher Ministre,

St. Petersburg, March 25, 1907.

Me référant à notre conversation de ce matin, voici en deux mots, et à titre tout a fait privé, un court résumé de mes observations. Je serais heureux de savoir si le Gouvernement Impérial dans le cas où la vie ou les biens du Zil es Sultan ou de sa famille seront en danger, serait disposé à faire quelques démarches en sa faveur, et à donner des assurances à cet effet à mon Gouvernement ou au Zil-es-Sultan lui-même, à condition bien entendu, que ce personnage reste toujours fidèle au Schah et aux institutions de son pays. Je me suis permis de vous expliquer ce matin les motifs de mes observations, qui ont été suggérées par l'éventualité d'un accord sur la Perse.

Veuillez, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 409.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 69.)

Tehran, D. April 11, 1907.

Sir,

R. May 18, 1907.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt on April 7th of copy of a draft convention relative to Persia communicated by M. Isvolsky on February 20.⁽¹⁾

It is clear from the date and manner of the communication that my opinion on this proposed arrangement is neither invited nor desired. At the same time it appears to be my duty as laid down in the King's general instructions to advise you as to the probable effects of such an agreement upon British interests in the country in which I reside, and where the Agreement is operative.

I assume that the amendments desired by you are carried into effect and that Russia is debarred from eventually exercising control over the coast-line outside the Gulf and the frontier adjacent to Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and also that British concessions lying within the Russian sphere are maintained. Some of these concessions, as the D'Arcy Oil concession, the Khanikin telegraph-line, and the Sultanabad-Dizful road are not yet exploited, either wholly or in part. I presume that British interests in this respect will be fully safeguarded and that it will be clearly laid down that not only are existing concessions to be maintained, and to be held entitled to the fullest diplomatic support, but that they can be renewed if so desired. This point is of importance in view of the fact that while the concession of the Telegraph Company has been renewed to 1945 the Indo-European Telegraph Department's concession expires in 1925 and should be renewed like that of the Company for another 20 years. It would also be of importance to receive some

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 432, No. 389, *encl.*]

security that the telegraph lines now being worked by British enterprise are not redeemed by purchase by the Persian Government in order to be transferred to other hands. Another point which vitally interests British enterprise is that the Russian Bank should be precluded from acquiring the monopoly of the import of silver for coinage purposes which they demanded some years ago and which would render nugatory the note monopoly enjoyed by the Imperial Bank.

The right at present held by Great Britain of administering the quarantine service in South Persia is of great importance as if allowed to fall into other hands it would probably be exercised to the detriment of British trade. In view of the hostile attitude of Russia and her Belgian agents, towards the British quarantine service it would be a wise precaution to secure her formal adhesion to a continuance of the present arrangement.

With regard to the effect on popular opinion here of the publication of such an agreement as the present convention there cannot I think be any reasonable doubt. It will simply be regarded as a treaty for the partition of Persia. It will be observed that there is no formal and definite pledge as to the integrity and independence of Persia but merely a reference in the preamble to the existing engagements which are, as is known, of an informal nature. It was hoped that any agreement between Russia and England would contain a formal engagement to maintain these principles, and the resulting disappointment will be considerable. It will also be observed that the two Governments are animated by the desire "to maintain order throughout Persia and to establish equal advantages for trade;" that they recognize "their mutual interests in maintaining peace and order in certain provinces;" and that each pledges itself not to seek concessions within a certain zone which is reserved for the other. It will be concluded from these expressions that the two Governments arrogate to themselves the right of maintaining order in the Shah's dominions and also of acquiring exclusive concessions in certain provinces, which become a sort of special preserve.

In view of the strong current of public opinion which now prevails and which is hostile to any foreign concession, or any species of foreign control, the publication of an agreement of such a nature as this, and couched in such terms cannot fail to produce a very strong impression. Any foreign country, not directly concerned in the Anglo-Russian agreement would undoubtedly be able to reap considerable advantage from the odium which would certainly accrue to the contracting parties; and they should be prepared for such an eventuality. It will be urged by those hostile to the influence of Russia and England here—of whom there are many—that the two Empires have agreed together to connive at the acquisition of the widest possible rights,—“concessions of whatever nature political or commercial,”—by England or Russia in by far the largest and richest part of the Persian Empire, mutually abandoning to one another the exclusive privilege of exploiting the assigned provinces. I consider it my duty to point out to you—what indeed is evident and has already been repeatedly brought to your notice—that public opinion in Persia will be deeply stirred by what will be regarded as a partition of the Empire and a claim to exercise control over the sovereign rights of the State, and that a great impetus will at once be given to the already existing anti-foreign sentiment, which has hitherto been kept in control, though with constantly increasing difficulty. And I also beg to add that there is reason to fear that this feeling will be all the more bitter against England in proportion to the hopes which have been centred in her, and the belief in her friendly sentiments and sympathy, which have so long prevailed, especially among the popular classes, who have looked to the Liberal Government of England to protect them against the encroachments of Russian autocracy.

With regard to the practical value and effect of the agreement if concluded, I do not believe it will either accelerate or retard the advance of Russia in this country. It is interesting, however, as giving an indication to what are Russia's designs, namely to construct a line towards Herat by the route surveyed by

M. Lessar on the left bank of the Heri Rud to Kuhsan, to commence the line along the easy alignment towards the Gulf of Oman already surveyed viâ Kashan and Yezd, and to construct the connecting line between the Caucasian system and the Bagdad railway viâ Tabriz, Hamadan and Khanikin which is no doubt already agreed on with Germany. By the time these lines are finished the position of Russia will be so strong that even if the convention has still some time to run, it will be a case for the application of Count Lamsdorff's doctrine that "when circumstances are no longer the same, former agreements cannot be considered as binding." It will, however, be a matter of some difficulty for Russia to carry out this programme under her own authority. To judge by present appearances the Persian Government will resolutely refuse to grant any concessions whatever to foreigners. The Assembly will attempt to develop the resources of the country by assigning concessions to native companies which no doubt will seek foreign help, but will naturally be averse to applying directly either to Russia or Great Britain. But the alignment to be followed by railways or roads will probably be decided by the power which possesses the control over the seat of the Government. There is no doubt which power it is. Russia has given us a seat on the saddle, but she sits in front and holds the bridle. You emphasize this point of view when you express the desire to neutralize the seat of Government. But I venture to point out that this can only be attempted by a series of provisions forbidding Russia to advance money to the Government, or increase her guards, or organize the army under Russian officers, or resort to the innumerable means of influence, direct and indirect, of which she at present disposes. And I venture to add that even if Russia consented to the insertion of such provisions in the convention, they would be useless. Nothing could be more abundant and precise than the series of self-denying provisions of this nature contained in the Korean agreements between Japan and Russia of 1896 and 1898. But these did not prevent the Russian officials on the spot from resorting to naval demonstrations, acquiring control of the Korean Government by flattery and menace, from attacking the Japanese Bank Note monopoly or from attempting to obtain possession of strategical positions and of the control of the coinage, mining rights, and general financial administration of the country.

I venture to express the opinion that no pledge of this character would be of much value and that nothing will prevent Russia from obtaining complete control over the Persian Government except the resistance of Persia herself and her own reluctance to overcome that resistance by force. It appears evident that the Persian people will resist, nor will their resistance be diminished by the fact that England will be held to have abandoned their cause. But we cannot expect that their resistance will be in the interests of Great Britain: and we cannot hope to obtain a very favourable hearing to our own demands. I cannot but regard the situation of British interests in North Persia, and indeed over the whole Empire, as likely to be precarious after the conclusion of the agreement; and I trust that their owners will be warned to look for protection not to Tehran but to St. Petersburg.

Although in a sense the convention only recognizes what already exists, and what we cannot prevent, namely the immense preponderance of Russia in northern Persia and in the capital, its publication will I think produce a considerable effect on the general situation. It will imply the definite withdrawal of England from the diplomatic struggle at Tehran on which the Persians have so long relied as the safeguard of their independence. And it will no doubt cause a feeling of fear and indignation, which will very probably take the form of an appeal to other countries for assistance. It is not probable that assistance will be granted in any practical form. The only hope for Persian independence lies not in foreign help, or treaties or conventions, but in the Persian people themselves and in their newly acquired sense of dignity and patriotism, and perhaps in the solidarity of all mussulmans. His Majesty's Government can hardly desire to place themselves in public opposition to such a sentiment. But from what I hear I have good reason to believe that the

agreement between England and Russia will be classed with that between England and France as an anti-mussulman combine, and that an appeal will be made to Mohammedan feeling all over the world.

I venture therefore to suggest that simultaneously with the publication of the agreement such explanations will be publicly made as will show clearly what is the real object of the agreement and that it was never intended in any way to lead to the partition of the Persian Empire or the spoliation and enslavement of the Persian people.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

⁽²⁾ [Two long minutes by Sir C. Hardinge and Sir E. Grey attached to this despatch, apparently written on May 14, 1907, sketched the lines of the reply finally sent on June 12. *v. infra*, pp. 470-1, No. 421. The interval was caused by consultation of the India Office.]

No. 410.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/369.

(No. 231.) Confidential.

Sir,

Constantinople, D. April 17, 1907.

R. April 22, 1907.

During last summer, when the Russian Ambassador and myself were supporting the representations of the Persian Ambassador with a view to the settlement of the Turco-Persian frontier, we were suddenly informed by Prince Riza Khan that the German Ambassador had offered him his support, and that while gratefully acknowledging His Excellency's friendly offer, His Highness had pointed out that in case he failed to come to an understanding with the Porte, he would, in accordance with the Anglo-Russian agreement of March 1865, have to refer the points in dispute to the decision of the Governments of England and Russia.

In the course of a recent conversation with the Russian Ambassador, the conversation turned on the curious development given to the Turco-Persian negotiations by the introduction of Germany on the scene, as I had left here in September and had heard nothing more on the subject, I asked His Excellency if he knew why the German Ambassador had suddenly taken such interest in the question and offered the Persian Ambassador his good offices.

Monsieur Zinoviev, speaking confidentially, then proceeded to tell me that the Persian Ambassador had one day received a telegram from his Government, instructing him to ask for the assistance of the German Ambassador, that he had replied it was difficult to do so as the British and Russian Ambassadors were the natural arbitrators, and that he had thereupon been told to appeal all the same for the good offices of the German, and keep his Government informed of the course of the negotiations.

Monsieur Zinoviev, who is on intimate terms with his Persian Colleague, went on to say that he had subsequently learnt that the telegrams, giving these instructions to Prince Riza Khan, though signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, were in Monsieur Naus' private cypher and that there was no doubt it was one of this gentleman's many intrigues to gain the support of Germany. Monsieur Naus had, as I knew, been a constant visitor at the German Embassy, during his stay here and as he was not only a born intriguer, but also a man of considerable resource, it was possible he had concocted some scheme with the new German Minister in Persia, Monsieur Stenrich [*sic*], quite regardless of the interest of Persia.

Indeed he had gathered from a secret source that he had undertaken to settle the frontier question in such a favourable manner for Turkey as to justify the German Embassy, to whom the credit of the Settlement would be given, in demanding a recompense from the Sultan, which could take the shape of a coaling Station or Island on the Persian Gulf.

His Excellency said he had reminded the Persian Ambassador of the declaration made by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords in 1903 and that he had strongly censured the Persian Government for giving such liberty of action in political affairs to an official of Monsieur Naus' stamp.

His Excellency said he was not aware of any special activity by Germany at the present moment to obtain a Port or Coaling Station on the Persian Gulf, but he thought it not unlikely that some sort of promise may have been made by the Sultan to give them an Island or Coaling Station in the Gulf in connection with the Bagdad Railway.

He said that if he got any further information on the subject he would not fail to let me know.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

MINUTES.

Prince Riza Khan's official and confidential statements are in direct conflict. In the first he says the German Ambas[sado]r offered his services which he declined and in the second that in spite of his advice to the contrary he was instructed to appeal to the German Ambas[sado]r for his assistance. This does not lead one to think that he is more trustworthy than most of his countrymen or that the story he tells is based on anything more than pure conjecture. M. Naus must have been well aware of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of March 1865 and is very unlikely to have tried such an ineffectual and roundabout way to help Germany to get a footing on the Gulf. It is however quite likely that the Persian Gov[ernmen]t appealed to Germany in the hope that even if it did not lead to direct result it might at least stimulate the anxiety of the British and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts to obtain a settlement satisfactory to them.

The Russian Ambas[sado]r thinks it not unlikely that the Germans have got the promise of coaling station in the Gulf from the Sultan.

W. E.

Ap. 23.

We have been already warned that Germany might claim, under Art[icle] XVIII of her Treaty with Persia of June 6, 1873, to tender her good offices. The words are "Pour le cas ou la Perse serait impliquée dans un différend avec une autre Puissance, le Gouv[ernemen]t d'Allemagne se déclare prêt à employer, sur la demande du Gouv[ernemen]t de S[a] M[ajesté] I[mpériale] le Shah, ses bons offices pour contribuer à applanir le différend."

It is curious to find the Russian Ambas[sado]r quoting to the Persian Lord Lansdowne's declaration of 1903.

R. P. M.

The Russians cannot wish to see Germany obtain a footing in the Persian Gulf.*
The whole story of this alleged intrigue on the part of M. Naus is very doubtful.

F. A. C.

24 Apl.

*Less now than ever.

C. H.

E. G.

No. 411.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 220.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 22, 1907.

R. April 29, 1907.

With reference to your despatches Nos. 154 and 155 of the 17th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit herewith, copy of an *Aide Mémoire* which I communicated to M. Isvolsky this afternoon in reply to the *Pro Memoria* of the Russian Government of the 2nd instant,⁽²⁾ respecting certain points in the Draft Convention concerning Persia.

⁽¹⁾ [These despatches enclosed the correspondence between the Foreign Office and the India Office upon Nos. 398, 401 and 403 (*supra*, pp. 442-3, 443, and 444-5), and desire Sir A. Nicolson to communicate with M. Isvolski in the sense of No. 406 (*supra*, pp. 447-8).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 446-7, No. 404, *encl. 2.*]

I explained to His Excellency that I had drawn up Articles 3, 4, and 5 for the sake of convenience, and that it seemed to me that we were now practically very near the termination of the Convention respecting Persia. His Excellency agreed with me, and said that he must study the paper which I had left with him before giving a reply; and there was still the question of the two telegraph lines. I observed that I had submitted a Draft declaration on that subject to him and was awaiting his reply.⁽³⁾ He said that there were one or two points connected with that question which he would probably have to mention to me, but that he did not desire to enter upon it at this moment.

I said that he would observe in the Draft Articles which I now communicated no mention was made of "zones" or "spheres," as it was desirable to avoid employing those terms which might give rise to misapprehension.

His Excellency appeared to agree with this view.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 411.

Aide-mémoire communicated April 9/22, 1907.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy had the honour to receive the *Pro memoriâ* of the Imperial Russian Gov[ernmen]t dated the 20th March/2 april 1907 in reply to the *Aide Mémoire* which was communicated by H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy on the 25 Feb[ruary]/10 March.⁽⁴⁾ The Imperial Gov[ernmen]t points out in its above-mentioned *Pro memoriâ* that the right of control over the Persian Customs, in case of non-payment of the coupons, has been ceded to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t by virtue of a contract concluded with the Persian Gov[ernmen]t, and that therefore it is necessary to decide whether that right could be ceded to a third Power, and whether the Persian Gov[ernmen]t would be justified in protesting against such a transaction. H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy would beg leave to point out that the party to whom the collection of the pledged revenues was intrusted would merely be acting as the Agent of the other, and it would therefore not appear that the Persian Gov[ernmen]t would have any right to object to such a proceeding.

The Imperial Gov[ernmen]t also desired to be informed as to what rights H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t possess of taking action in the event of the non payment of the interest on British Loans; and consequently what would be the responsibility incurred by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t should this contingency arise. H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy beg leave to observe that the loan contracts concluded by the Imperial Bank of Persia with the Persian Gov[ernmen]t do not expressly provide for such a case, but the right of control in the event of non-payment may be held to follow inherently from the hypothecation of the revenues.

The *Pro-memoriâ* of the 20 March/2 April further remarked that it would be desirable to omit all mention of "third parties" in regard to concessions in the neutral zones. H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy is authorized to agree with this omission and also to reciprocally engage not to oppose, without a previous understanding with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, the grant of concessions to Russian subjects in those neutral zones.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy would, therefore, suggest the following articles connected with the above subjects, and which would be numbered Article 3, 4 and 5 of the proposed Draft Convention. Articles 1 and 2 refer to the respective spheres, and on these an accord has already been reached, provided that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t consent to the rectification of the line of the Russian sphere of influence as

⁽³⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 441-2, No. 397, *encl.*]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 439-40, No. 395, *encl.*]

requested by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t, viz., that it should terminate at Zulficar and not at a point near Kuhsan.

ARTICLE 3.

Russia, on her part, further engages not to oppose without previous arrangement with Great Britain, any grant of concessions to British Subjects in the regions of Persia outside of the lines mentioned in Articles I and II. Great Britain undertakes a similar engagement as regards the grant of concessions to Russian subjects in the same regions of Persia.

All existing concessions within the lines mentioned in Articles I and II are maintained.

ARTICLE 4.

It is understood that the revenues of all the Persian Customs, with the exception of those of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, guaranteeing the repayment and the interests of the loans concluded in Russia by the Government of the Shah shall be devoted to the same purpose as in the past.

It is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian Customs of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, as well as those of the Caspian Fisheries and of Posts and Telegraphs shall be devoted as in the past to the service of loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia.

ARTICLE 5.

In the case of the non-payment of the interest on loans contracted by the Government of the Shah in Russia, Great Britain would be prepared to undertake the collection and the remission to the Russian Government of the due proportion of the Customs receipts or other revenues pledged to the service of such loans in the regions within the lines mentioned in Article II.

In similar circumstances, Russia would be prepared to undertake the collection and remission to His Britannic Majesty's Government of the due proportion of the customs receipts or other revenues pledged to the service of the loans contracted by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia in the regions within the lines mentioned in Article I.

MINUTES.

M. Izvolsky probably intends to raise the question of our control of the telegraph line not extending into the Russian sphere.

R. P. M.

I think that Sir Charles Hardinge is contemplating a deal by which our line would be brought up to Zulficar.

Article III. If this article means that in the event of a Russian subject asking for a concession in the neutral zone to which we might object, we should not be at liberty to do so without first approaching the Russian Gov[ernmen]t with a view to an agreement, but that if no agreement were arrived at, we should be at liberty to oppose, it is easy to defend. If it means that, in the event of a Russian applying for a concession which we don't like, we may go to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and make an arrangement with them under which we may oppose it but that if we cannot agree about it, must acquiesce, then I think it is perhaps less easy to defend.

We might substitute for the words "without previous arrangement" the words "without a previous exchange of views" which is vaguer. I am aware that this cuts both ways and that at present our position is better than the Russian position in the neutral zone and that it is in some respects more probable that we shall go ahead there than the Russians. But this is a debateable point and it might be argued that the Russians will make a determined attempt to undermine our position on the Gulf--on the whole I do not think that we should suffer by the change of words that I suggest.

L. M.

In my opinion the wording "without previous arrangement" is the most advantageous wording for British interests. British enterprise has undoubtedly much greater facilities in the

neutral zone, which is practically Southern Persia, than Russian enterprise. The geographical situation is greatly to the advantage of British enterprise so long as there is no Russian railway to the South. As regards the latter contingency there is no cause for alarm. The country between the west of our sphere and the Turkish frontier is of such a barren and mountainous character, chain after chain of mountains rising diagonally across any railway route from the North, that there need be no fear of any Company or Gov[ernmen]t attempting such a gigantic task as a railway to the S[outh] of Persia, since it would be extremely costly and could not possibly pay. The only possibility for a railway was long ago foreseen by the Russians and it would have run diagonally from west to south east along the valleys, between the ranges of mountains, and would have terminated at Charbar. This route is now blocked by Charbar being well within our sphere. I should like however, in order to make quite sure, to consult the Intelligence Dep[artmen]t and to see if they concur with what I have stated. If they do agree, I think Sir A. Nicolson's wording should be maintained as being more advantageous to us than the Russians.

Consult I. D.

C. H.

E. G.

No. 412.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

Tehran, April 26, 1907.

I was glad to receive your definite instructions as to my attitude towards the various attempts made to induce me to take sides against the popular party. You say that the Russian Government has shown no signs of wishing to depart from an attitude of neutrality. That may be true of St. Petersburg. It is not true of Tehran. You will see that there are abundant signs that the Russian agents are anxious to help the Shah to put down the reform party by force. Our determination not to take part in such a policy has altered the situation. If we do not join them Russia will have the sole responsibility and will have to encounter the undivided odium. And this would be very dangerous. As the financial agent said the other day; "you might take Persia with a thousand men and at the expense of a million roubles but it would take whole army corps and millions of money to hold it." If the Persian people could count on the sympathy of any large section of European public opinion as well as of the whole Mahomedan world the task of the conqueror would be a hard one. So I think that for the present the policy of Russia will be to encourage the Shah to undermine the assembly by peaceful means and not to attack it by force and to avoid armed intervention as long as possible.

You must count however, as I suppose you have counted, on the effect on popular opinion here and in other Mahomedan countries of your close agreement with Russia. You will be judged by your friends and associates; and if Russia, as is the case, is notoriously hostile to the patriotic movement in Persia, and if you make an agreement with Russia, the simple people here will take for granted that in your heart you think as Russia does. No doubt there are many things gained by the agreement and by common action. But you must be prepared to pay the cost and as far as I can judge part of the price is a great loss of popularity here which may react unfavourably on your position in other Mahomedan countries. It will also increase the power and prestige of Germany. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 31.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter gives further details of possible German influences, and the Persian attitude to Anglo-Russian negotiations.]

MINUTE.

Our agreement with Russia is a mutual self-denying ordinance recognizing Persian independence. It may annoy Persia who has lived on the enmity between us and Russia, but we cannot keep up a quarrel with Russia in order to curry favour with the Persians.

E. G.

[ED. NOTE.—The following minutes are filed in F.O. 371/370 as "separate minutes," not being attached to any specific document :

MINUTES.

There are one or two points which still require our attention in the draft agreement with Russia relating to Persia.

According to the text as it now stands there is nothing to prevent Russia or Germany from making a purely commercial railway with a terminus on the Persian Gulf. I do not see why we should object to a Russian railway terminus of a purely commercial nature on the Gulf, in fact the late Gov[ernmen]t on more than one occasion expressed their readiness to consider this question and that their efforts were not directed towards the exclusion of the legitimate trade of other Powers. But if the Russians enjoy this right, the Germans can equally claim it, and by securing a terminus for the Bagdad Railway on the Persian side of the Gulf they would be able to prevent us obstructing them, as we have done in the past, from building the railway without our participation or consent. It seems fairly certain that we shall at a not very remote date come to terms with the Germans and participate in the Bagdad Railway, but it is always possible that we may not. To meet this contingency it might be as well to make the following addition to the preamble:—

" les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de la Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'antiquité et l'indépendance ainsi que le maintien du statu quo sur les frontières et le littoral de la Perse et "

It is possible that the Russians might object to this insertion as precluding the possibility of their running a railway to the Gulf, although my impression is that they have, at any rate for the time being, given up any such idea, but I believe that they fully realise the danger of letting the Germans come in and for that reason it is not improbable that they may accept it.

As regards the change of our line from Birjand-Gazik to Birjand-Zulficar which Sir E. Grey proposes to make a matter of bargain with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in accepting Turbat-i-Haidari instead of Meshed as the terminal of the Seistan Telegraph line, it has been pointed out to me that although from the point of view of the British public it would look better if our line goes to Zulficar it can make no possible difference to the Russians from a strategic point of view, since if they wished to attack Afghanistan the Russian forces could easily invade the country in traversing our zone long before we could do anything to prevent them, even if any other steps were possible.

I have further consulted the Intelligence Department as to the possibility of the construction of railways from the north to the South and west of Bunder Abbas and I am told that from the opinions of many officers who have visited Southern Persia and studied that country, their conclusion is that no railways could be built except at a gigantic and entirely unremunerative cost, with the exception possibly of a line from Mohammerah following the bed of the Karun and its branches, and of this latter point the Intelligence Dep[artmen]t were not quite sure.

It would however be possible to build a railway running east and west and following the contour of the coast of the Persian Gulf. Such a railway could hardly have a strategic value.

C. H.

May 8, 1907.

The reference to the littoral is desirable if possible.

E. G.

I do not wish to raise small points; but we should perhaps bear in mind in the final edition that Zulficar itself is on Afghan territory. It was a point round which a long controversy raged in 1885-6.

F.]

No. 413.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 277.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 23, 1907.

R. May 27, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a private letter and its enclosure, which I have received from M. Izvolski, regarding the collection and the remission of the pledged revenues in the respective British and Russian zones in the event of the Persian Government defaulting in the regular payment of the coupons of the British and Russian loans.

In my despatch No. 261 of the 15th instant,⁽²⁾ I explained the doubts which M. Izvolski felt as to accepting the draft article 5 of the Persian convention which I had communicated to him.⁽³⁾ The memorandum which I now beg to transmit, would, if His Majesty's Government agreed to its terms, be substituted for the above-mentioned article.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 413.

*M. Izvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.**Ministère Impérial des Affaires Etrangères,**le 10/23 mai, 1907.*

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

En me référant à notre conversation sur votre aide mémoire du 11/24 avril⁽⁴⁾ dernier, je m'empresse de vous transmettre notre contre-projet de l'article ayant trait au mode de perception des sommes dues à l'une des parties contractantes sur des revenus situés dans la sphère de l'autre. Vous ayant déjà fait part verbalement des considérations sur lesquelles est basé notre contre-projet je m'abstiens, pour éviter tout retard, de les développer dans un memorandum spécial qui pourrait ne pas être prêt aujourd'hui même.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

(Sd.) ISVOLSKY.

Enclosure 2 in No. 413.

Counter-Draft.

R. 10/23 May, 1907.

En cas d'irrégularités dans l'amortissement ou le paiement des intérêts des emprunts persans conclus jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement en Russie ou en Angleterre, et si la nécessité se présente pour une des parties contractantes d'instituer un contrôle sur les sources de revenus, garantissant le service régulier des emprunts conclus chez elle par la Perse et situées dans la sphère d'influence de l'autre partie, les Gouvernements Russe et Anglais s'engagent à entrer préalablement dans un échange d'idées amical en vue de déterminer d'un commun accord les moyens d'effectuer les mesures de contrôle en question.

(1) [The substance of some minutes attached to this despatch was embodied in Sir E. Grey's reply, *v. infra*, pp. 465-6, No. 417.]

(2) [Not reproduced.]

(3) [*v. supra*, p. 456, No. 411, *encl.*]

(4) [The *aide-mémoire* was communicated on April 9/22, *v. supra*, pp. 455-6, No. 411, *encl.*]

No. 414.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, May 27, 1907.*

F.O. 371/370.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 78.)

R. 9 P.M.

Persian Convention.

I have received an *aide-mémoire*⁽¹⁾ stating that Russian Government agree with general sense of Article I, Article II, Article III, and Article IV of draft Convention as proposed in my *aide-mémoire* of 22nd April,⁽²⁾ including condition that Russian line should end at Zulficar.

Russian Government consider that there are one or two details of secondary importance to be settled, and that they will be prepared to finally draw up Convention when they receive reply to draft Article V, which I sent home in my despatch No. 277 of 23rd May.⁽³⁾

They promise to give me very shortly reply as to the transfer of the two telegraph lines.

⁽¹⁾ [Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 285 of May 28, R. May 31, enclosed the text of the *aide-mémoire* which was as follows :

Le Gouvernement Impérial se trouve d'accord avec le sens général des articles 1, 2, 3 et 4 du projet de convention sur la question de la Perse tel qu'il a été proposé dans l'aide mémoire de l'Ambassade d'Angleterre du 9/22 avril dernier, y inclus la condition que la ligne qui démarque la sphère d'influence russe aboutisse à Zulfagar; il ne considère nécessaire que de régler quelques détails d'importance secondaire, tel, par exemple, le tracé définitif de cette ligne, d'écarter ou de changer quelques expressions insuffisamment claires et déterminées qui seraient de nature à provoquer des contestations, et de mettre la dernière main à la rédaction de la convention, aussitôt qu'il sera en possession de la réponse de l'Ambassade au sujet d'une nouvelle rédaction de l'article 5, communiquée à Sir Arthur Nicolson le 10/23 mai courant.

Quant à la question de l'échange des lignes télégraphiques, le Ministère Impérial se réserve de faire parvenir incessamment à l'Ambassade Britannique un projet d'accord y relatif.

St. Petersburg, le 14/27 mai 1907.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 455-6, No. 411, *encl.*]

⁽³⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 415.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, May 29, 1907.*

F.O. 371/309.

D. 8.1 P.M.

Tel. (No. 79.)

R. 10 P.M.

Persian Telegraphs: Prolongation of Concessions.

Your despatch No. 184.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs handed to me to-day a Memorandum in reply to my communication of 19th May. The Memorandum points out that proposed steps of His Majesty's Government would introduce considerable changes in existing state of things in Persia as regards rights acquired by England and Russia respectively.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. This despatch (dated May 15) relates to the proposal to renew the contract of the Indo-European Telegraph Department with the Persian Government for a period of twenty years after its existing date of termination (1925). Sir A. Nicolson was requested to inform the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs of this proposal. On May 22, Sir A. Nicolson sent a despatch to Sir E. Grey (No. 274) stating that he had written a private letter to M. Isvolski on the subject. This private letter appears to be the communication of May 19 referred to above.]

Two of the lines would pass through provinces situated in the proposed Russian sphere. Memorandum considers, therefore, that it would be just, in order not to depart from understanding established at commencement of negotiations, not to introduce during discussions any change in the rights of the two parties when, as in present case, these rights are evidently in close relationship with the present negotiations.

Minister for Foreign Affairs clearly wished to avoid my discussing the Memorandum at our interview, as he merely handed it to me saying that it contained some observations on the letter which I had written to him.

I shall have an opportunity to go into the matter with him very shortly when we discuss small amendments (merely drafting amendments he assured me) which he wishes introduced into Article I, Article II, Article III, Article IV of draft Convention, as in Article III there is a clause as to maintenance of existing Concessions.

I should be grateful for your views as to the language I should hold, and as to whether I should insist on our right to propose the prolongation at the present moment. I should like also to know if the moment is opportune for proposing the prolongation to the Persian Government, and whether Persian Assembly would raise no difficulties. It is possible that Minister for Foreign Affairs might allude to these considerations.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

No. 416.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 306.)

St. Petersburg, D. June 6, 1907.

Sir,

R. June 10, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith an *aide-mémoire* which I have received from M. Isvolsky enclosing some amendments which the Russian Government desire to introduce into the Preamble and into Article I to IV of the Draft Convention concerning Persia.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 416.

Aide-mémoire.

St. Pétersbourg, le 5 juin, 1907.

Dans son Aide Mémoire du 14/27 mai c[ouran]t, le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial, tout en constatant l'accord établi entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie quant au contenu du préambule et des quatre premiers articles de la Convention à conclure sur les affaires de Perse, se proposait de revenir sur quelques détails de l'arrangement qui, de son avis, exigeaient des éclaircissements supplémentaires.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Impérial a cru donc utile de mettre en regard le texte du préambule et des 4 premiers articles, tel qu'il a été accepté en principe par les deux Gouv[ernemen]ts, et les changements qu'il proposerait, pour sa part, d'y introduire, conformément à la pièce ci-jointe.

Sans s'arrêter sur quelques modifications de rédaction d'importance secondaire, qui y sont désignées en marge, le Ministère Imp[érial] croit devoir attirer tout spécialement l'attention de l'Amb[assadeur] Britannique sur les points suivants qui tout en ne touchant en rien aux bases de l'entente établies, ont tout de même une certaine portée.

1. Il est à noter tout d'abord que l'expression "animés du sincère désir de maintenir l'ordre et le développement pacifique dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire

l'ersan"—implique l'idée d'un engagement direct de garantir le maintien de l'ordre en Perse, ce qui n'entre évidemment pas dans les intentions des parties contractantes. Il serait donc préférable de rédiger ce passage comme suit: "animés du sincère désir de voir l'ordre et le développement pacifique maintenus dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire Persan."

2. La convention ayant exclusivement trait aux intérêts de la Grande Bretagne et de la Russie en Perse, il serait peut-être désirable d'omettre le passage relatif "aux avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les nations." d'autant plus que ce passage n'est pas en tous points conforme avec les dispositions du projet de la Convention.

3. De l'avis du Ministère Imp[érial] il semblerait préférable d'atténuer en tant que possible toute expression faisant allusion à des cas de mésintelligence entre les deux Puissances, et par conséquent d'omettre les mots "constatant l'effet nuisible résultant des cas de friction sur place dans leurs relations avec la Perse, et entre eux-mêmes." Le sens général du paragraphe n'en serait pas, semble-t-il, moins clair.

4. Comme la Russie a consenti en principe à faire aboutir la ligne de démarcation de sa sphère d'influence à Zulfagar, il reste à définir d'une manière précise les points principaux que la ligne en question devra traverser à partir de Khakh; le Ministère Imp[érial] désirerait la voir passer par les localités Khaf et Kiariz et la montagne Kuh-Benitak. Cette direction aurait l'avantage de comprendre dans la sphère d'influence Russe le poste sanitaire de Kiariz très important au point de vue de la garantie des possessions Russes de l'invasion d'épidémies.

5. Les limites de la zone russe n'étant indiquées dans l'article I que du côté méridional y aurait-il nécessité de mentionner dans l'article II "les frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan" comme limitant la zone anglaise?

6. Enfin le Gouv[ernemen]t Russe proposerait, pour plus de précision, de compléter l'article IV par une indication qu'il ne s'agit des emprunts conclus, aussi bien à la Banque Impériale de Perse, qu'à la Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts, "jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement."

Saint-Petersbourg, le 23 Mai/5 Juin, 1907.

Enclosure 2 in No. 416.

Modifications proposées par le Gouvernement de Russie.

Le Texte de Convention, relative aux affaires de Perse, adopté en principe par les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne et de Russie.

voir l'ordre et le développement pacifique maintenus

à exclure

Les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne et de Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse et animés du sincère désir de maintenir l'ordre et le développement pacifique dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire Persan, aussi bien que d'établir des avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les nations, ont résolu qu'une convention sera conclue entre eux aux termes suivants:

Les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne et de Russie reconnaissent mutuellement que chacun d'eux a pour des raisons d'ordre géographique et économique un intérêt

voir la paix et l'ordre maintenus

à exclure

de l'autre

spécial à maintenir la paix et l'ordre dans certaines provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière russe d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan, de l'autre; et chacun des deux Gouvernements, constatant l'effet nuisible résultant des cas de friction sur place dans leurs relations avec la Perse et entre eux-mêmes, est désireux d'éviter tout motif de collision avec les intérêts spéciaux de chacun d'eux dans les provinces persanes dont il a été fait mention plus haut.

En conséquence, il a été décidé par la présente comme suit :

I.

Iezd, Khakh, Khaf, Kiariz et la montagne Kuh-Benitak

La Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer, en faveur de sujets britanniques, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale,—telles que les concessions de chemins de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance, etc.—au delà d'une ligne partant de Kasri - Chirin, traversant Isphahan, Iezd et Khakh et aboutissant à la frontière afghane près de Zulficar, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région, soutenues par le Gouvernement Russe.

II.

et aboutissant à Bender-Abbas

La Russie, de son côté, s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets russes, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale, telles que les concessions de chemins de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance etc.—au delà d'une ligne allant de la frontière afghane par Gazik, Birljand, Kerman et Bender-Abbas et par les frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudistan, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Britannique.

III.

entre les

identique

La Russie s'engage pour sa part à ne pas s'opposer, sans s'être préalablement entendue avec l'Angleterre, à ce que des concessions quelconques soient données à des sujets britanniques dans les régions de la Perse situées en dehors des lignes mentionnées dans les articles I et II.

La Grande Bretagne prend un engagement analogue en ce qui concerne des concessions à donner à des sujets russes dans les mêmes régions de la Perse.

Toutes les concessions existant actuellement en deçà des lignes désignées dans les articles I et II sont maintenues.

IV.

revenus garantissant

à la Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement

sur le littoral Persan de la Mer Caspienne et ceux

Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement.

Il est entendu que les revenus de toutes les douanes persanes, à l'exception de celles du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, garantissant l'amortissement et les intérêts des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah en Russie, seront affectés au même but que par le passé.

Il est également entendu que les revenus de douanes persanes du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, aussi bien que ceux des pêcheries de la mer Caspienne et des Postes et Télégraphes seront affectés comme par le passé au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah à la Banque Impériale de Perse.

[ED. NOTE.—There is some difficulty as to the document following. Sir Edward Grey sent it on the 6th, and it therefore crossed Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 306 (v. immediately preceding document), which did not reach him until the 10th. Sir A. Nicolson telegraphed on the 6th that his despatch was coming, but gave no indication as to what the changes were which M. Isvolski had proposed (Tel. No. 86 of June 6, D. 2 P.M., R. 5-15 P.M.). The following minutes appear on this telegram :

Our revised draft will arrive in St. Petersburg about the same time. Sir A. Nicolson had better be told not to put it forward until we have considered the Russian draft.

L. M.
C. H.

Yes; it is very opportune for us that M. Isvolsky should have suggested amendments in the preamble and so opened the question of amending it, and we should wait to see what they are, in case we should be able to base something of what we want upon them or put forward our amendments as a condition of accepting the Russian ones.

E. G.

A telegram was accordingly sent to Sir A. Nicolson on the 7th (No. 72) instructing him not to communicate the amendments described in the despatch sent him on the 6th until M. Isvolski's proposals had been received.

An *Ed. note* on p. 468, *infra*, refers to the difficulty caused by the absence of an authoritative text of Sir Edward Grey's revised draft. A further difficulty is presented by the fact that Sir Edward Grey refers in this despatch to "the Russian draft" of Articles 2, 3 and 4. No drafts of Articles 3 and 4 appear to have been exchanged at this date except the British draft of April 22.]

No. 417.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 225.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 6, 1907.

I have received Y[our] E[xcellency's] desp[atch] No. 277 of the 23rd ult[imo]⁽¹⁾ forwarding copy of a private letter from the Russian Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] in which was enclosed an article which his Gov[ernment] desire to substitute for Article V of the draft Anglo-Russian Convention respecting Persia proposed by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment].

I now tr[ansmit] to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith a revised draft Convention, embodying certain modifications which, after further consideration, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would desire to see introduced into that Agreement.

Y[our] E[xcellency] will observe that most of the modifications made affect the preamble of the instrument.

For the expression "*to maintain order and peaceful development throughout the whole extent of the Persian Empire*" has been substituted the phrase "*for the preservation, &c.*" This alteration has been made in consequence of the opinion expressed by H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister at Tehran in his desp[atch] No. 69 of April 11,⁽²⁾ that the original wording might be held to imply an intention on the part of the two Gov[ernments] to arrogate to themselves the right of maintaining order in the dominions of the Shah, and that such an expression cannot fail to produce an unfortunate effect on the minds of the Persian Gov[ernment] and people.

Although, as Y[our] E[xcellency] is well aware, the two Gov[ernments] have in fact no such intention, it seems nevertheless desirable to remove the possibility of any such misunderstanding and it is hoped that the phrase which it is now proposed to employ will effect this object.

In the second paragraph of the preamble it has been thought well to insert a reference to the special interest of Great Britain in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf. This clause has been added in view of the strong and explicit declarations of my predecessor on this subject, which is evidently one of paramount importance to Great Britain.⁽³⁾ It is felt that the omission from the present Agreement of any mention of this point would make a bad impression on public opinion in this country, and seriously affect the popularity of the Agreement when concluded. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] therefore press for the insertion of these words in the preamble in order to secure that the Agreement when announced in this country should be accepted from the first by both parties with goodwill.

In Article 1 the words "at a point on the Persian frontier adjoining the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers" have been substituted for the words "on the Afghan frontier near Zulfikar." This change has been introduced at the suggestion of the India Office who have pointed out that Zulfikar is well within the territory of Afghanistan. The substituted wording has the further advantage of emphasising the fact that the end of the line defining the Russian sphere lies in Persia and not in Afghanistan.

Articles 2, 3, and 4 of the Russian draft are retained unaltered.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 459, No. 413.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 450-3, No. 409.]

⁽³⁾ [*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 121, p. 1348, and *cp.* references, *supra*, p. 371, No. 321. and *infra*, p. 482, No. 430, p. 488, No. 439, and p. 493, No. 444, *min.*]

The draft article put forward by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in place of the British Article 5 is accepted with the addition at the end of the following clause:—

“and to avoid all interference in the respective spheres which would not be in conformity with the principles governing the present Convention.”

These words have been inserted in order specifically to exclude all possibility of the exercise by Russia of her right of control over such of the sources of revenue affected to the service of the Russian loans in Persia as lie within the British sphere, in the event of irregularity occurring in the service of those loans as foreseen in the article.

The article has also been subjected to a few verbal alterations which, it is thought, will render its sense more explicit.

In communicating to M. Izvolski these proposals, which it is hoped will prove acceptable to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, Y[our] E[xcellency] will exercise your discretion as to how far you should discuss with him the considerations which have given rise to them.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

Enclosure in No. 417.

Revised Draft Convention.

THE Governments of Great Britain and Russia, having mutually engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia, and being animated by a sincere desire for the preservation of order throughout the Persian Empire and for the peaceful development of that country as well as for the permanent establishment of equal advantages for the trade and industry of all other nations;

Considering that each of them has, for geographical and economic reasons, a special interest in the maintenance of peace and order in certain provinces of Persia adjoining, or in the neighbourhood of, the Russian frontier on the one hand, and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan on the other hand, and that Great Britain has a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf, and being desirous of avoiding all cause of conflict between their respective interests in the above-mentioned regions;

Have agreed upon the following Convention:—

ARTICLE I.

Great Britain engages not to seek for herself, and not to support in favour of British subjects or in favour of the subjects of third Powers, any concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs,

LES Gouvernements de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse, et animés d'un sincère désir pour la préservation de l'ordre dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire Persan et pour le développement pacifique de ce pays, aussi bien que pour l'établissement permanent des avantages égaux pour commerce et l'industrie de toutes les autres nations;

Considérant que chacun d'eux a, pour des raisons d'ordre géographique et économique, un intérêt spécial au maintien de la paix et de l'ordre dans certaines provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière Russe, d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan, de l'autre; et que la Grande-Bretagne a un intérêt spécial au maintien du *statu quo* au Golfe Persique, et étant désireux d'éviter tout motif de conflit entre leurs intérêts respectifs dans les régions susmentionnées;

Se sont mis d'accord sur la Convention suivante:

ARTICLE I.

La Grande-Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets Britanniques, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale

roads, transport, insurance, &c.—beyond a line starting from Kasr-i-Shirin, crossing Isfahan, Yezd and Kakhk and ending at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar concessions in this region which are supported by the Russian Government.

ARTICLE II.

Russia, on her part, engages not to seek for herself and not to support, in favour of Russian subjects, or in favour of the subjects of third Powers, any concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c.—beyond a line going from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, and ending at Bunder Abbas, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar concessions in this region which are supported by the British Government.

ARTICLE III.

Russia, on her part, further engages not to oppose, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, any grant of concessions to British subjects in the regions of Persia within the lines mentioned in Articles I and II. Great Britain undertakes a similar engagement as regards the grant of concessions to Russian subjects in the same regions of Persia.

All existing concessions within the lines mentioned in Articles I and II are maintained.

ARTICLE IV.

It is understood that the revenues of all the Persian customs, with the exception of those of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, guaranteeing the amortization and the interest of the loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the "Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse" up to the date of the signature of the present Arrangement, shall be devoted to the same purpose as in the past.

[16942]

—telles que les concessions de chemin de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance, &c.—au delà d'une ligne partant de Kasri-Chirin, traversant Ispahan, Iezd, et Khakh et aboutissant à un point sur la frontière Persane contigu à l'intersection des frontières Russe et Afghane, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Russe.

ARTICLE II.

La Russie, de son côté, s'engage à ne pas rechercher, pour elle-même, et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets Russes, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemin de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurances, &c.—au delà d'une ligne allant de la frontière Afghane par Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, et aboutissant à Bender-Abbas, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Britannique

ARTICLE III.

La Russie, de son côté, s'engage, en outre, à ne pas s'opposer, sans entente préalable avec la Grande-Bretagne, à des concessions en faveur de sujets Britanniques dans les régions de la Perse entre les lignes dont il a été fait mention aux Articles I et II. La Grande-Bretagne prend un engagement identique à l'égard des concessions en faveur de sujets Russes dans les mêmes régions de la Perse.

Toute concession actuellement en vigueur dans les limites dont il a été fait mention aux Articles I et II est maintenue.

ARTICLE IV.

Il est entendu que les revenus de toutes les douanes Persanes, à l'exception de celles du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, revenus garantissant l'amortissement et les intérêts des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah à la Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent Arrangement, seront affectés au même but que par le passé.

It is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian customs of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, as well as those of the fisheries on the Persian shore of the Caspian Sea and those of the Posts and Telegraphs, shall be devoted, as in the past, to the service of loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia up to the date of the signature of the present Arrangement.

Il est également entendu que les revenus des douanes Persanes du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, aussi bien que ceux des pêcheries sur le littoral Persan de la Mer Caspienne et ceux des Postes et Télégraphes, seront affectés, comme par le passé, au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah avec la Banque Impériale de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent Arrangement.

ARTICLE V.

In the event of irregularities occurring in the amortization or the payment of the interest of the Persian loans concluded with the "Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse" and with the Imperial Bank of Persia up to the date of the signature of the present Arrangement, and in the event of the necessity arising, for Russia to establish control over the sources of revenue which are affected to the regular service of the loans concluded with the first-named bank, and which are situated in the regions mentioned in Article II of the present Convention, or for Great Britain to establish control over the sources of revenue which are affected to the regular service of the loans concluded with the second-named bank, and which are situated in the regions mentioned in Article I of the present Convention, the British and Russian Governments undertake to enter beforehand into a friendly exchange of ideas with a view to determine, in agreement with each other, the means of giving effect to the measures of control in question, and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles governing the present Convention.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The text of the above Revised Draft Convention is not bound with the despatch which enclosed it and the original text, which should be in the Embassy Archives, has been destroyed, together with the despatch. The version given above is from the *Confidential Print*, the French of Article V being missing. Another printed version is given, *infra*, pp. 624-5, Appendix IV.]

No. 418.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 7, 1907.

F.O. 370/370.

D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 87.)

R. 5.30 P.M.

Persian Convention.

Article V.

I have informed Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] accept Russian text with the proposed addenda, but I would suggest that I might also propose to him the following amendments in drafting of Russian text.

Instead of "Persian loans concluded in Russia—England" to say "Persian loans concluded with Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse and the Imperial Bank of Persia."

In the Russian amendments to Article IV sent to you by messenger yesterday the Discount Bank is mentioned and not Russia.

I would also suggest instead of words: "and situate in the sphere of influence of the other party" to employ some such wording as "and situate as regards revenues assigned to the former Bank in the regions mentioned in Article II and as regards those assigned to latter Bank in the regions mentioned in Article I."

We should thus avoid employing the phrase "sphere of influence" which it would be of advantage to omit.

May I propose these amendments?

MINUTE.

These proposed amendments seem to be improvements. It is only a question of wording.

C. H.

E. G.

No. 419.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Foreign Office, June 10, 1907.

Tel. (No. 78.)

D. 1 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] No. 87 (Persian Convention).

I concur in proposed amendments.

No. 420.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 10, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

D. 8-10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 91.)

R. 10 P.M.

Persia Convention.

Article V. My telegram No. 87.

I have received Memorandum from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, accepting our proposed addition. He gives proposed final wording of above Article, and instead of "sphere of influence" he uses the expression "sphere of interests." Latter expression seems preferable to the former, but I will await your reply to suggestion made in my above-mentioned telegram. Instead of in the final sentence "principles governing the present Convention" he employs the words "principes servant de base à la présente Convention." This, I presume, we can accept. Remainder of Article is identical with that which I forwarded originally.

MINUTE.

These are quite harmless and may, I think, be accepted without reference to the I[ndia] O[ffice].

C. H.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 106.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 12, 1907.

I have received your desp[atch] No. 69 of Ap[ri]l 11⁽¹⁾ in which you express your views on the draft Convention relative to Persia comm[unicat]ed by M. Isvolsky on Feb[ruary] 20.⁽²⁾

You will have observed from the con[fidentia]l print which has doubtless reached you by now that considerable alterations have already been agreed upon by the British and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts in its text and I transmit herewith a counterdraft which has been prepared by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t, and which with some possible minor modifications, chiefly of a verbal character, still under consideration will shortly be comm[unica]ted to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding as to the interpretation which might be placed upon the Agreement in regard to the position of Gr[ea]t Britain in the Persian Gulf, I have proposed the insertion in the Preamble of a reference to the special interests of this country in the maintenance of the *Status Quo* in those regions.

An article (III) has been agreed upon which will minimize the danger that the preponderating influence of Russia due to the inclusion of Tehran within her sphere of interest will be used to prevent the acquisition of British concessions in the neutral zone, while Art[icle] V which has also been accepted by the Russian Government is designed to obviate the possibility of Russia exercising in the British sphere the right to control the customs which is conferred upon her by her loan contracts in the case of default.

You will also note that an important modification has been made in the definition of the Russian sphere, the Russian Gov[ernmen]t having consented to the line terminating at Zulficar instead of at Kuhsan. It is thus secured that no part of the Russian sphere will be conterminous with the Afghan frontier, a point on the importance of which I need not dwell.

You lay stress on the desirability of fully safeguarding British interests in respect of concessions which have not yet been exploited and suggest that it should be laid down that not only are existing concessions to be maintained but that they may be renewed on their expiry.

It has been agreed that all existing concessions are to be maintained. Should a concession have remained unexploited, it will become a question for consideration whether the circumstances are such as to warrant H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in approaching the Persian Gov[ernmen]t with a view to its prolongation but I do not consider that any special provision to this end is called for.

It is not easy to meet the objection that the renewal of duly exploited concessions on their termination would be contrary to the spirit of the agreement and in view of the expression of opinion evoked from the Russian Gov[ernmen]t by the proposal to ask for an extension of the concessions of the Indo-European Tel[egraph] Dep[artmen]t it does not appear possible to insert a provision to this effect.

With regard to your further suggestion that some security sh[oul]d be obtained that the telegraph lines now being worked by British enterprise are not redeemed by purchase by the Persian Gov[ernmen]t in order to be transferred to other hands I am of opinion that it would not be possible to ask the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to give such security which would be worthless owing to their inability to prevent such a transaction.

The question of the extension of the Indo-European Telegraph Dep[artmen]t's contracts is at the present moment under discussion with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and it is hoped that a satisfactory solution may be arrived at.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 450-3, No. 409.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 432, No. 389, *encl.*]

You lay stress upon the importance of precluding the Russian Bank from obtaining a monopoly of the importation of silver but this is not a question which can be dealt with in a Convention, since it is dependent on the Charter of the Imperial Bank of Persia. As however the latter has establishments both in the British and neutral zones it would form a legitimate subject of discussion between the two Gov[ernmen]ts after the conclusion of the agreement.

I entirely share your view as to the importance of maintaining in British hands the administration of the quarantine service in S[outhern] Persia, but this is a question which is necessarily outside the scope of the present Convention. You are aware that the improvement of the service is now the subject of correspondence with the Gov[ernmen]t of India and if a diplomatic discussion became necessary, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would be in a better position to pursue it with success if they were able to point to a thoroughly efficient service.

The clause which I have proposed as to the maintenance of the *Status Quo* in the Gulf will, however, it may be hoped, render such a negotiation unnecessary.

I am unable to share your view that the agreement contains no formal and definite pledge as to the integrity and independence of Persia. The words of the Preamble are sufficiently clear and precise on this point and the existing engagements on the subject, however informal may have been their nature originally, are now formally renewed and fortified by the fact that they are referred to in a Treaty.

You will observe that in deference to your objections the wording of the Preamble has been modified so as to avert the danger which you fear that the Persian Gov[ernmen]t will conclude that the British and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts are arrogating to themselves the right of maintaining order or establishing equal advantages for trade in the Shah's dominions.

There is however no question of the two Gov[ernmen]ts "acquiring exclusive concessions in certain provinces" or of their claiming "the exclusive privilege of exploiting the assigned provinces" but merely of a self-denying ordinance on the part of each Power not to seek concessions in the sphere of interest of the other, third parties being in no way excluded from seeking for concessions throughout Persia.

As regards your obs[ervatio]ns as to Russian Railway designs I would merely point out that M. Lessar's projects date from some time back and that in any case the "easy alignment towards the Gulf of Oman . . . viâ Kushan and Yezd" will be blocked by the interposition of the British zone.

The logical conclusion of your despatch is that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] should continue to pursue the same policy which they have followed in the past of attempting to support Persia against Russian advances.

It is a matter of opinion how far this policy has been successful but, in any case, it entails the disadvantage of creating for this country responsibilities which might result in an obligation on our part to come, sooner or later, to the assistance of Persia by force.

I will not discuss here the means at the disposal of this country if such an alternative became necessary but I am strongly of opinion that an endeavour should be made to avert such an issue and to arrive at a peaceful solution of this problem.

If, as you assume, Russia is a country with whom it is impossible to secure a lasting agreement, or even an understanding it might no doubt become necessary in any case to consider the possibility of forcible measures but the conclusion of the present agreement will place H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in a position to know definitely when the moment for such action arrives and H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would be on far stronger moral ground for resisting any attack which might be made upon their interests, if they are able to appeal to the Treaty engagements of the R[ussian] G[overnment].

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 422.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/370.

St. Petersburg, D. June 14, 1907, 11.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 96.)

R. June 15, 1907, 7 A.M.

Persian Convention.

I propose Article V should run as follows:—

“In the event of irregularities occurring in amortization, or in the payment of interest of the Persian loans concluded with the Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse and with Imperial Bank of Persia up to date of signature of present Arrangement, and, in event of the necessity arising for Russia to establish control over sources of revenue affected to the regular service of loans concluded with first-named Bank, and which are situated in the regions mentioned in Article II of the present Convention, or for Great Britain to establish control over sources of revenue affected to the regular service of the loans concluded with second-named Bank, and which are situated in the regions mentioned in Article I of present Convention, the British and Russian Governments undertake to enter beforehand into a friendly exchange of ideas with a view to determine in agreement with each other the means of giving effect to the measures of control in question, and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles governing the present Convention.”

No. 423.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Foreign Office, June 17, 1907.

Tel. (No. 82.)

D. 4.50 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] No. 94 (of June 14 Transfer of Meshed-Tehran and Meshed-Seistan Tel[igraph] lines).

You should inform Russian Gov[ernmen]t that as H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t now have control over entire Meshed-Tehran line they consider transfer must be complete and give them control of whole Meshed-Seistan line.

No. 424.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Foreign Office, June 17, 1907.

Tel. (No. 83.)

*D. 5 P.M.*Your Tel[egram] No. 96 (of June 14 Persian Convention).⁽¹⁾

I approve proposed wording of Art[icle] V with addition of words “which are” between “revenue” and “affected” in both places.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 472, No. 422.]

No. 425.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Foreign Office, June 21, 1907.

Tel. (No. 89.)

D. 6'30 P.M.

Your desp[atch] No. 306 (of June 6 Persian Convention).⁽¹⁾
Preamble.

We desire retention of words "aussi bien que . . . nations." Omission would expose Convention to criticism in Persia and in all countries having commercial relations with her, especially Germany, as reserving portions of Persia for exclusive exploitation by G[rea]t Britain and Russia. But to make it consistent with Art[icles] I and II which specifically exclude G[reat] Britain and Russia from seeking concessions etc in the sphere of the other we propose substitution of "toutes les autres nations" for "toutes les nations."

We agree to omission of words "constatant . . . entre eux-mêmes."

Remaining objections have been met in our draft, enclosed in my desp[atch] No. 225 of June 6⁽²⁾ but we are willing to adopt Russian text if M. Isvolsky is insistent.

Art[icle] I.

We cannot accept proposed change in Russian line which would be brought too close to Afghan frontier and is open to same objections as original proposal that line sh[oul]d terminate at Kuhsan. See my tel[egram] 30 of March 8.⁽³⁾ The compromise now proposed by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t could not fail to excite hostile criticism in this country and create an atmosphere unfavourable to the agreement which it is to the general interest to avoid.

You may however inform Russian Gov[ernmen]t that if they consider maintenance of sanitary station at Karez indispensable we will not object provided they agree not to interfere with existing arrangement whereby quarantine on Persian Gulf is under British control.

Art[icle]s II, III and IV.

No objection to proposed amendments.

When informing Russian Gov[ernmen]t of our views on these amendments you should also communicate to them the amendments which are suggested in my desp[atch] No. 225 to which we attach considerable importance, especially the allusion to the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf and the definition of the line from Kakh to the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers.

We have received your text of Art[icle] V with which we agree.⁽⁴⁾ We consider "governing" a correct translation of "servant de base à."

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 461-4, No. 416.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 465-8, No. 417.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 435-6, No. 393.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 472, No. 422.]

No. 426.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/309.

Foreign Office, June 21, 1907.

Tel. (No. 90.)

D. 7 P.M.

Renewal of Telegraph Concessions.

Your Desp[atch] No. 287.⁽¹⁾

We have always held the view that the maintenance of existing concessions

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch enclosed the Memorandum summarised in Tel. No. 79, *v. supra*, pp. 460-1, No. 415.]

provided for in Art[icle] III of the Persian draft Convention implies their renewal if the Persian Gov[ernmen]t agree and we still maintain this in principle.

You should explain this clearly to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t but you can propose as a solution of the present difficulty that they should not object to the renewal of our telegraph Concessions in return for a surrender to them of our rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line. You should explain that on the expiry of our Telegraph Concessions the German Gov[ernmen]t would probably endeavour to obtain control of the telegraph line from Khanikin to Tehran and eventually to the Indian frontier.

In order to avoid complications which might arise from introducing questions relating to tel[egraph] lines into the discussions on the draft Convention you should further propose to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t that if they have no objection to such a course the seat of the negotiations respecting Telegraph questions might be conveniently transferred to London and Count Benckendorff authorised to conduct them. These negotiations would be carried on concurrently with those at St. Petersburg resp[ecting] the draft Convention in order that the conclusions on both may be arrived at simultaneously.

No. 427.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 111.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 21, 1907.

The Mushir-ul-Mulk came to see me to-day.

On my saying that affairs in Persia seemed to be in an interesting condition, and that it was to be hoped an accord would be reached between the Shah and the Madjliss and all parties, the Mushir-ul-Mulk said this was very desirable, but impressed upon me with great emphasis that time would be necessary for it.

He told me that he had had a very interesting conversation with M. Isvolsky at St. Petersburg. The conversation had been very satisfactory, for it had brought out two points: that Russia did not intend to intervene in Persian affairs unless the interests of her subjects were attacked, and that the negotiations between England and Russia were not directed against the integrity and independence of Persia. The Mushir-ul-Mulk said that public opinion in Persia had been anxious on this point, and it was very desirable that it should be reassured.

I said I agreed entirely with what M. Isvolsky had said. Hitherto there had been a struggle between Russia and England, each trying to prevent the preponderance of the other in Persia. Had that struggle continued during the present uncertainty in Persia, there would have been a great temptation for one of us to intervene in Persian affairs, in order to prevent the other from taking advantage of the situation, or to gain an advantage at the other's expense. The object of the present negotiations between Russia and England was to prevent difficulties arising between ourselves, and the negotiations were not in any way directed against Persia.

The Mushir-ul-Mulk said that there was an idea that England and Russia were dividing Persia into spheres of influence.

I told him this was not a correct impression. It would be more correct to say that the Agreement at which we desired to arrive was one by which we should not push our influence in those parts of Persia which bordered on the frontiers of each other.

The Mushir-ul-Mulk asked whether an *entente* had been concluded.

I said none had been concluded. But we acted from day to day in agreement with Russia as circumstances arose, and were still exchanging views as to what might be a permanent Agreement.

He told me that Persia had a special arrangement with Russia on the question of Railways. It was said that we had addressed a note to Russia specially on the subject of Railways, and had received no reply.

I said there had been no special negotiations between us, and no special Note. with regard to Railways. There was no doubt, however, that if an arrangement was come to between us on general lines we should not ask for Railway concessions which would be to the disadvantage of each other.

The Mushir-ul-Mulk said that the two things which must be arranged in Persia were Finance and Education. Finance was very important.

I said I realised the importance of this, but it would be necessary for the Persian Gov[ernmen]t to have an understanding with the Madjliss in order to arrange Finance.

The Mushir-ul-Mulk said this was so, and again impressed upon me that time would be necessary to bring about such an understanding.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTES.

In conversation this morning with the Persian Ambassador on the subject of our negotiations with Russia, he told me that there was one point upon which his Gov[ernmen]t felt considerable anxiety. They had heard that Persia was to be divided into spheres of influence, which might mean the partition of Persia and the reply which he had received from M. Isvolsky on this score was not satisfactory.

I told the Mushir-ul-Mulk that considering that the integrity and independence of Persia were specifically mentioned in the text of the agreement there could be no question of our agreeing to anything that could imply the partition of Persia. It was true that certain frontier districts were mentioned as those in which British and Russian interests were respectively predominant, but that the agreement, if concluded, would be in the nature of a self-denying ordinance prohibiting British concessions near the Russian frontier and *vice versa*. This stipulation would not however interfere with the enterprise of other foreign nationalities in Persia who could compete for concessions over the whole of Persia, while Great Britain and Russia were debarred from competing in the regions where Russian and British interests predominate.

He seemed very pleased with this explanation which he said that he would tel[egraph] at once to his Gov[ernmen]t.

C. H.

June 21,
1907.

It agrees very well with what I said, but was more explicit and full, which was right.

E. G.

No. 428.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 24, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 106.) Confidential.

D. 8-25 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Persian draft Convention.

I communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day amendments proposed in your despatch No. 225⁽¹⁾ and telegram No. 89.⁽²⁾ His Excellency had the greatest possible doubt as to Russian Government being able to accept insertion in preamble of a passage relative to special interest of Great Britain in maintenance of *status quo* in Persian Gulf. His Excellency (? observed) that this was introducing at a very late hour a matter which did not concern Great Britain and Russia alone, but also several other Powers, and that it was enlarging the scope of the Agreement beyond

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 465-8, No. 417, and *encl.*]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 473, No. 425.]

limit which we had both originally laid down, and had up to now scrupulously respected. The Convention, as drawn up, had dealt with matters concerning Russia and Great Britain alone, and had raised no points to which other Powers could take exception or which gave them any justification for considering their interests affected. His Excellency himself did not contest our special interests in the Gulf, but that was not the point. We desired to introduce into a Convention which had for its main object removal of all causes of friction between the two Powers a clause which raised a question in which other Powers might consider they were interested, and he feared that an embarrassing situation might hereafter arise.

Proposal had come as a surprise to him, and he hinted if it were of such importance to us we should not have suggested it at the last moment, but have put it forward before. In short, I could see that he was greatly disturbed at our proposal, which he fears will create difficulties with third Powers. I, of course, argued with him, but did not shake his opinion, and I think that it is probable that the more he reflects upon it the greater will be his objections to it. He objected on somewhat similar grounds to mentioning the question of our control over quarantine in the Persian Gulf, and he is anxious to keep Persian Gulf entirely out of the discussions.

He told me he was most anxious to sign the Conventions with as little delay as possible, and that he wished to do so by 15th July (N.S.) He impressed seriously on me that delay was dangerous, and I imagine pressure is being brought to bear against the conclusion of our Agreements. He was very positive as to the risk of delay and distressed at questions now being raised, which would prolong discussions and perhaps imperil the whole arrangement. He said he hoped to be able to give His Majesty's Government replies on both Persian and Afghan questions in a very few days, and on my suggesting that I might expedite matters by taking them home and discussing them with you, returning here in a fortnight, he begged me not to leave but to stay here and hasten the conclusion. I gather Berlin is causing uneasiness, and I understand opposition here is active in certain quarters.

I would submit that due weight should be given to his observations, as they were made very seriously.

I think we could with success insist on Russian line running straight from Kakh to a point near intersection of Russian and Afghan frontiers, but that we might yield as to complete control of whole of Meshed-Seistan telegraph line and leave out the *status quo* clause. We should really have gained all that is essential, and, I confess, more than I anticipated, and it seems to me we have a good defence against all criticisms. If I could receive early reply to this telegram it would help to expedite matters.

MINUTES.

M. Isvolsky objects to the *Status Quo* amendment on the ground that it is new matter imported into the Agreement at the last moment and that other Powers may object. I think that we should not be rushed into signing by July 15 and that we should maintain our proposal and make every endeavour to secure it.

We might inform the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, perhaps through Count Benckendorff that the mere assertion that Great Britain has a special interest in the maintenance of the *Status Quo* in the Persian Gulf does not commit the Russian Gov[ernmen]t *vis-à-vis* a third Power any more than the other statements in the Preamble as to the special interests of each Power in the provinces adjoining their respective frontiers, that so far as H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] is concerned it is not new matter or an attempt to enlarge the scope of the Agreement for they regarded it as understood that nothing in the Agreement should be taken as affecting their special position in the gulf and have inserted the words in the d[raft] Preamble more with a view to making this clear and to rendering the Agreement acceptable to all Parties in Gr[ea]t Britain than anything else.

With regard to Quarantine, this need not be mentioned if we get the line from Khak to the frontier.

L. M.

It was unfortunate that the insertion of the clause in the preamble relating to the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Persian Gulf was an afterthought on our part, but there is no doubt that, whatever the necessity for it may have been a few weeks ago, it is still more important now

than heretofore that something should be done to disarm hostile criticism in this country provoked by recent incidents in St. Petersburg.

M. Isvolsky is evidently very much frightened of Germany, but I do not think that he has realised that the clause in the preamble does not bind Russia in any way as to the action of other Powers in the Persian Gulf, but merely seems for us the neutrality of Russia in those regions. This neutrality is what we want, and although it would be the natural consequence of the conclusion of this agreement, still we want some reference or admission in the text for shop-window purposes, and to disarm hostile criticism on the part of the extremists and conservatives in the H[ouse] of Commons.

I read yesterday to C[oun]t Benckendorff extracts from this telegram, and he told me that although he had already given fully our vi[ew]s to M. Isvolsky by letter, he would at once send a further explanatory telegram enlarging upon the importance, from the point of view of public and parliamentary opinion, of a reference to the situation in the Persian Gulf, with a view to the avoidance of hostile criticism.

I think we should reply to Sir A. Nicolson pointing out that public opinion in this country would attach considerable importance to the mention of the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Gulf and that while the reference made to it in the preamble cannot possibly bind other Powers it would give satisfaction here as insuring the neutrality of Russia in any question involving other Powers in the Persian Gulf. It would be best to maintain the preamble as it stands if it is possible, and if so, we would be ready to give to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t a declaration that the recognition of our special interests applied to Russia alone, and does not imply that she denies any interests to any other Powers in the Gulf. Or we might ask M. Isvolsky to suggest any form of words which might in his opinion meet our views as to Russian neutrality without engaging Russia further than towards ourselves. The last alternative would be to omit all mention of the Persian Gulf in the preamble and for Sir E. Grey to make a declaration in the House of Commons on the lines of that made by Lord Lansdowne.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 429.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/370.

(No. 342.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 24, 1907.

R. July 2, 1907.

I called by appointment on M. Isvolsky this afternoon, and said that I was prepared to communicate to him the replies of His Majesty's Government to the modifications which he had suggested in the Draft Convention concerning Persia.⁽¹⁾ I told His Excellency that my Government had accepted the amendments proposed in Articles 2, 3 and 4, and that they further agreed to the elimination of the clause in the preamble relative to the injurious effect of local friction. His Majesty's Government however desired to retain the clause concerning equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations; but in view of the observations made in his *aide-mémoire* of June 5, and in order to render the passage consistent with Art[icle]s I and II they would suggest that the words "all other countries" should be substituted for "all countries."⁽²⁾

I said that there was one other point to which His Majesty's Government attached great importance, and which I did not doubt that the Russian Government would make no difficulty in accepting, and that was that a clause should be inserted in the preamble referring to the special interests which Great Britain had in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf. This was a matter in which British public opinion took a great interest, and my Government considered it to be necessary in order to satisfy the feeling in my country and to assist in the general acceptance of the Convention, that some mention should be formally made of the fact.

In Art[icle] I there was also a modification which I must propose, and that was in regard to the tracing of the Russian line from Kakh northwards. We had

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 461-4, No. 416, and *encls.*]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 473, No. 425.]

assumed naturally that the line would run direct from Kakh to its terminus at a point near the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers: but in the *aide-mémoire* of June 5 the line as traced made a considerable deviation eastwards and ran close along the Afghan frontier. To this tracing the same objections must be raised as were formulated in regard to the Russian line terminating near Kuhsan, and I repeated to His Excellency the nature of the objections which had been made on that occasion. I told His Excellency that he would find these points set forth in the *Aide mémoire* which I begged leave to hand to him, and of which I have the honour to enclose a copy.

M. Isvolsky said that a very serious question was raised by the proposed insertion of a clause relative to the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf; and that he had the gravest doubts if the Russian Government could consent to its being interpolated. He did not himself wish to contest that Great Britain had special and predominant interests in the Gulf; but he wished to explain at once to me how the question presented itself at first sight to him. During all our discussions regarding the Persian Convention both Governments had strictly limited themselves to treating of matters which concerned themselves alone, and which neither directly nor indirectly affected the interests of other Powers. These wise restrictions would exclude any other Power from having any justification hereafter to complain that the two negotiating countries had dealt with, or touched upon, interests other than their own. At the last moment Great Britain proposed to enlarge the scope of the agreement, and to extend it to a question which it was known was in a sense a controversial one, and which did touch upon the interests of others. It could not be denied that Turkey and Germany did not admit to the full our contentions as to the Persian Gulf, and if the clause were inserted, and Russia subscribed to it, he feared that an embarrassing situation would hereafter arise. The clause had a far-reaching effect and he could not foretell what consequences; and he did not understand why if the matter were of such importance to us, it had not been brought forward earlier. The Convention as drawn up between us, and in regard to which he had hoped only some secondary details had to be settled, was chiefly directed to avoiding all possible causes of friction between the two Powers, and related solely to our respective frontiers; and he regretted that we should now wish to raise a delicate and important question, which was mixed up with other controversial matter. He would only mention for the moment the Bagdad railway and Koweit.

I told M. Isvolsky that I perfectly appreciated the force of his argument that the question had been raised at a late hour: but I would tell him frankly that there was likely to be opposition from some quarters in Great Britain and India to our agreement, and that as it was desirable to modify such opposition and procure as general acceptance as possible of the Convention, my Government after careful consideration had desired to refer to a matter in which the British public took a very keen interest. I did not deny that the proposal came late in the day, but many would consider that a Convention about Persia with no mention of the Persian Gulf was deficient. Moreover I did not see why the Russian Government should hesitate to subscribe to a proposition which was incontrovertible. We did not ask Russia to take any action nor did we attempt to bind her in respect to other countries. We stated an undoubted fact, which was surely universally recognized, which had been affirmed over and over again, and very emphatically by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords in 1903.

M. Isvolsky said he doubted that the recognition of the fact was so universal as I had stated, and he was perfectly well aware of our views on the subject, and also of Lord Lansdowne's statement. He strongly demurred however to introducing fresh factors into the agreement, especially at a moment when the negotiations were on the point of being terminated. What should we have said if Russia had suddenly sprung upon us a request to recognize her special interests in Armenia for instance?

I replied that the Persian Gulf was closely connected with Persia, as it washed

the whole of the southern littoral of that country. His Excellency remarked that it washed the coasts of other countries as well. But all this was beside the mark. He adjured me to take into consideration the serious consequences of opening up this question. He was most eager to hasten on the conclusion of our negotiations, and he could assure me that it would be dangerous to delay their termination. Opposition was existent in this country and outside of it. There had been one or two agreements recently concluded which I must know had been displeasing to Berlin. He could with safety conclude our Convention on the lines we had originally drawn, and which hitherto we had both scrupulously observed, but I must remember that Russia had a powerful neighbour, alert and watchful, who had her eyes fixed on that very quarter of which we now desired to make formal mention in our Convention in a form which could not but produce suspicion and dissatisfaction. He was ready to meet any criticisms if we kept within the original scope of the agreement, but the case would be different if fresh factors were introduced, which in any case would prolong the discussions; and this he must repeat to me would be most dangerous.

I said that of course I would report to you all his observations as faithfully as possible, but that I could by no means say if they would induce my Government to abandon their request. M. Isvolsky made a slight gesture of despair and I asked him if he could tell me, leaving the immediate question on one side, when he hoped to sign the Conventions.

His Excellency took an almanac and said that he hoped to be able to give me replies to both Persian and Afghan questions by the 3rd of July new style. I observed that if he did this, and that as my Government was as desirous as himself to hasten the conclusion, I proposed, in order to expedite matters, to take his replies home and discuss them with you, and return in about a fortnight, say on July 25th, and then we could finally settle all conventions. His Excellency begged me not to adopt this plan, but to stay here so that we might sign the Conventions on July 15. I was a little surprised at this promptness, but I told His Excellency that of course I would remain here till the negotiations were finally concluded.

His Excellency then reverted to the question of the tracing of the Russian line, and I told him that on that point it was really essential that their line on leaving Kakh should not deviate to the eastwards: it should run straight to the point in the corner near Zulficar. I said that if the Russian Government laid great stress on having Karez as a sanitary station we would be prepared not to object to that but on condition that they engaged not to interfere with the existing arrangement by which the quarantine in the Persian Gulf was under British control. M. Isvolsky said that again on this question there entered a reference to the Persian Gulf, which he desired to keep out of the Convention. Moreover he thought that the compromise was a little one-sided. We gave to them permission to establish a sanitary station at one place, and then required an acknowledgment on their part of our control over several localities. I observed that all that we requested was the admission of an arrangement already in force, while we were willing to cede a point only in contemplation. His Excellency said that he wished to think over this question.

I was much impressed by two facts in my conversation with M. Isvolsky: (1) his anxiety to exclude from consideration any matters affecting the Persian Gulf, as he evidently anticipates and fears that if we insist upon the inclusion in the Preamble of the Draft Convention of a recognition of our special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in that region Germany will exhibit, in some form or another, her displeasure at Russia having met our wishes in that respect. It is perfectly clear to me that M. Isvolsky will not run the risk of impairing in the slightest degree the good relations between Russia and Germany, especially at a time when Russia has not yet emerged from her internal difficulties or repaired the losses which she has suffered in a disastrous campaign. The second fact is that M. Isvolsky is exceedingly eager to hasten on as rapidly as possible the conclusion

of the negotiations. On this point I have not seen him, during the progress of our discussions, so emphatic or so eager. It was evident to me that either in home circles or outside something had occurred which had impressed on him the urgent necessity of losing no further time.

In these circumstances I venture to submit that we should not insist upon points which may either delay the conclusion of the negotiations or which may even imperil their ultimate success. Laving on one side public opinion either in Russia or in England, which probably will not be a constant factor, and regarding simply the enormous advantage to be acquired by the cessation of the rivalries and disputes which for so many years have strained and endangered the relations between the two countries, and the inestimable benefits to be gained by an amicable understanding between the two Great Powers in Asia, I would suggest that it would be most regrettable if an opportunity which may never recur should be lost, and if, owing to insistence on points which are not of vital importance, the hopes of a durable arrangement were to be disappointed. It seems to me that by the Conventions, even as they at present stand, we have secured all the guarantees which are necessary to the safety of our Indian frontiers; and that we have removed to a reasonable distance the danger of Russian aggression. As regards the Persian Gulf, even admitting that the approach to those waters is not definitely barred, and in present circumstances this could hardly be achieved. we have for the defence of our interests in those regions our naval preponderance with which no Power can compete. In order, therefore, to profit by the present eagerness of M. Isvolsky to put his seal to the arrangements on which we have practically already come to an agreement, I would respectfully urge that we should be conciliatory on minor details, and even on a question of public sentiment, and lose no time in finally concluding negotiations which have lasted for so many months.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 429.

Memorandum communicated by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

St. Petersburg, June 23, 1907.

His Majesty's Embassy had the honour to receive the *Aide Mémoire*, with its enclosure, which the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs was good enough to communicate on May 23/June 5 regarding the preamble and the four first articles of the Draft Convention concerning Persia.

His Majesty's Embassy has, in the first place, the honour to state that His Majesty's Government accept the amendments proposed by the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Articles 2, 3, and 4.

In regard to the preamble, His Majesty's Embassy would beg leave to point out that His Majesty's Government agree to omit the passage from the words "constatant l'effet" to the words "entre eux-mêmes"; but they consider it desirable to retain the passage in regard to equal opportunity for the commerce of other countries, and they fear that the exclusion of the words "aussi bien que d'établir des avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les nations" would expose the Convention to criticism in Persia and in all countries having commercial relations with her. In order however to render the passage consistent with Articles 1 and 2 which especially exclude Great Britain and Russia from seeking concessions in the sphere of the other, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to substitute the words "toutes les autres nations" for "toutes les nations."

His Majesty's Embassy desires also to state that His Majesty's Government consider it to be of great importance that reference should be made in the preamble of [sic] the special interest of Great Britain in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf; and a passage has consequently been inserted to that effect. His

Majesty's Embassy does not doubt that the Imperial Russian Government will agree to this insertion.

With respect to Article 1 His Majesty's Embassy would beg leave to point out that the tracing of the Russian line as proposed in the *Aide Mémoire* of May 28/June 5 would bring the line on leaving Kakh extremely close to the Afghan frontier, and would be open to the same objections as His Majesty's Embassy had the honour to formulate in regard to the original proposal that the line should terminate near Kuhsan. His Majesty's Embassy would beg leave to recapitulate these objections which were to the effect that the Russian and British spheres of interest are, as mentioned in the preamble contiguous or in proximity to the Russian frontier on the one hand and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Beloochistan on the other, and that no mention is made of a Russian sphere as contiguous with the Afghan frontier. Moreover Great Britain is responsible by Treaty engagements for the settlement of frontier disputes between Persia and Afghanistan, and the introduction of another Power having special interests on the Perso-Afghan frontier would tend to complicate matters. Moreover Zulficar is well within the territory of Afghanistan, and His Majesty's Embassy would therefore propose to the Imperial Government that the wording of the passage concerning the line should run as follows:—"from Kasri-Chirin by Isfahan Yezd and Kakh and terminating at a point on the Persian frontier adjoining the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers."

It is thereby understood that Khaf, Kiariz and the mountain Kuh-Benitak would lie outside of and to the eastwards of the line. If however the Imperial Russian Government consider that the maintenance of a sanitary station at Kiariz (Karez) is indispensable, His Majesty's Government will not object to that provided that the Russian Government will agree not to interfere with the existing arrangement whereby quarantine on the Persian Gulf is under British control.

His Majesty's Embassy has the honour to enclose the Preamble and Article 1 as amended in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty's Government.

St. Petersburg, June 10 (22) [*sic*] 1907.

MINUTES.

We informed Sir A. Nicolson on June 27 that if we obtained the line from Kakh to the frontier which we desired, an assurance of non-interference with our control over the Gulf quarantine would suffice, and if we do not get some kind of recognition of our special interests in the gulf I think we might ask for this. If the Russian Gov[ernmen]t consent to the inclusion of some phrase recognizing our special interests I think that we should make it clear that we consider that it includes Quarantine.

L. M.

At this stage of the negotiations I do not think it advisable to introduce any new ideas or conditions into the agreement relating to Persia. The declaration to be made about the Persian Gulf must cover all such questions as telegraphs, quarantine, Karun navigation, etc.

Sir A. Nicolson used his arguments in a skilful manner and I would draw special attention to what he says in the last par[agraph] of the desp[atch] as to the inconstancy of public opinion as a factor and the solid advantages to be obtained from an agreement.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 490.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 98.)

Foreign Office, June 27, 1907.

D. 10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 106.⁽¹⁾

Persian Convention.

It is certain that when Russian Agreement is known we shall be challenged as to position in Persian Gulf if no mention is made of it. The wording proposed would

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 475-6, No. 428.]

entail the neutrality of Russia in any question raised by other Powers with England in the Gulf, but would not commit Russia to guarantee that position or lay upon her any obligation to take action adverse to interests of other Powers. We should be ready to consider any wording, which would make this clear and so meet Monsieur Isvolsky's objection, that other Powers might take exception to what Russia had done.

If this course is not adopted and mention of the Persian Gulf is omitted in the agreement I must repeat in Parliament Lord Lansdowne's declaration and explain that as Agreement was concerned mainly with regions of Persia touching our respective frontiers and was in the nature of a self-denying instrument it was not thought appropriate to introduce into it a positive declaration respecting special interests in the Persian Gulf which might be regarded as concerning other Powers, but that I had no reason to suppose that the Maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf would give rise to difficulties between the British and Russian Governments. In view however of Article III it would be very desirable to have a statement in the Agreement to which I could point as evidence that the *status quo* in Persian Gulf would not be disturbed by Russian concessions, which we should be bound not to oppose without an arrangement with Russia. You should therefore press for mention of Gulf in the Agreement and unless persistence in this is likely to imperil the whole you should not put forward alternative of our independent statement in Parliament.

I hope Monsieur Isvolsky will recognize that we are not irreconcilable or unreasonable on the point at issue, but that we are sincerely desirous of promoting an early agreement in such a form as to meet with a friendly reception on all sides.

There need be no question of any mention in the agreement of our control over quarantine in the Persian Gulf, if we obtain the line we desire from Kakh to the frontier. As assurance of non-interference will suffice.

We shall not insist on complete control of Meshed-Seistan telegraph line within the Russian sphere but we should like in return for this concession that the Russian Government should adopt a friendly attitude on the subject of the renewal of the telegraph concessions and in particular of the section from Tehran to Ispahan so that the central station should remain at Tehran instead of at Ispahan after the expiration of the present concessions in 1925.

No. 431.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 28, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

D. 3.53 P.M.

Tel. (No. 109.)

R. 6.30 P.M.

Following is the text of a Memorandum which I have just received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs:—

“In regard to proposal of British Cabinet to mention in the preamble of the Convention the special interest of Great Britain in maintaining the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf, that proposal, put forward at a moment when the negotiations seemed about to terminate, affords grounds for serious objections. It is of a nature to completely change the character and the scope of the proposed Agreement, which, in its ‘*partie résolutive*,’ does not at all touch upon the Persian Gulf, in regard to which there has hitherto never been any question during *pourparlers* between Russia and England.

“A new clause referring to a political question, the importance of which cannot be misunderstood, and which touches very complex interests, would reopen

discussions, and might delay the signature not only of the Convention respecting Persian affairs, but also of all acts connected with all the other questions which have been treated. It should not be lost sight of that, besides Persia, there is also Turkey, to whom belongs more than half littoral⁽¹⁾ of the Gulf, and who must consider herself as directly interested in question. There are, moreover, other Powers who would certainly consider themselves injured if an Agreement were made without their knowledge.

"It is very important to avoid everything which might provoke the objections of third Powers to the Agreement between Russia and England.⁽²⁾ It is incontestable that, in its present form, that Agreement does not touch any collateral interest, and cannot consequently give occasion for any protest of any seriousness; but the clause proposed by the British Cabinet will not fail to create umbrage, and may become cause of an incident similar to that which followed on Anglo-French Agreement respecting Morocco.

"All these reasons move the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to earnestly beg British Cabinet to be good enough to withdraw its proposal to mention in the preamble its special interests in Persian Gulf. It is, moreover, well understood in formulating this request the Imperial Government does not at all mean to deny those interests, nor to exclude possibility of examining later on another occasion with the British question of Persian Gulf."

⁽¹⁾ [In the first decypher "literally" appeared here in error.]

⁽²⁾ [In the first decypher the words in this sentence "everything . . . England," were omitted. The correction was made in Tel. No. 111, of June 28 from Sir A. Nicolson.]

No. 482.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 28, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

D. 5.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 110.)

R. 6.30 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram: Persian Convention.⁽¹⁾

The Memorandum states Russian Government will agree to retention in Preamble of passage relating to equal opportunities for commerce of other countries with our proposed Amendment. I am to see Minister for Foreign Affairs to-morrow, and will endeavour to persuade him to agree to insertion of the *status quo* clause, but I am afraid I shall not succeed. I would then state that you will be obliged to make a public declaration of our views on the subject, and to add that we have reason to believe question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments.

In his *aide-mémoire* he admits that the Russian Government do not deny our special interests, and this could be taken note of, but perhaps you would not care to agree with him that the question of the Persian Gulf might form subject of subsequent discussions between the two Governments. If we agree to omit passage, I would propose to inform him in writing that we abandon our proposal in order to facilitate and expedite conclusion of Agreement, and that we take note of his recognition of our special interests, but that I should say nothing as to reopening a discussion later in regard to them.

⁽¹⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

No. 483.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, June 29, 1907.*

F.O. 371/370.

D. 12 noon.

Tel. (No. 112.)

R. 3 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 110.⁽¹⁾

I have been thinking over best course to pursue at my interview with M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] today and in view of Memorandum communicated by him yesterday and of his language to me the other day I feel sure that it would be of no avail to endeavour to induce him to alter his opinion as to the *status quo* passage. I will therefore make the graceful concession at once and, while explaining that in our opinion he could have agreed safely to our wishes, will say, that, in order to facilitate and expedite arrangement and to show our conciliatory disposition, we will not insist, and I will inform him of public declaration you will have to make.

It seems to me that in circumstances these will be the best (?) and will help on other outstanding points. I hope you will not think that I am giving way too easily. I would have gladly fought matter out if there had been a chance of succeeding and if there had been no risk of imperilling all the arrangement.

I would venture to suggest that I might reply to his *aide-mémoire* by recapitulating the arguments I used verbally at my interview of June 24⁽²⁾ and also those in your tel[egram] No. 98.⁽³⁾

I might perhaps mention that Conventions and Agreements which we have with several Chiefs in Gulf hardly permit us to agree with the extent of Turkish possessions in Gulf as stated in the *aide-mémoire* and add that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] note with pleasure that the Imperial Gov[ernment] does not deny special interests of Great Britain in the Gulf. Then conclude in order to facilitate arrangement we meet wishes so strongly expressed etc.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 475-8, No. 428.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 481-2, No. 430.]

No. 484.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1907.

Tel. (No. 94.)

D. 12.30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 110.⁽¹⁾

If M. Isvolsky absolutely refuses to accept wording of clause relating to Persian Gulf as it stands, you might suggest alternative clause "Great Britain has special interests in the Persian Gulf."

This would cover quarantine etc, and, although not as satisfactory as we would wish, is better than nothing.

We have reason to believe that French Amb[assado]r will be instr[ucte]d to support reference to Persian Gulf in preamble. In these circ[umstance]s it might, if not too late, be better to delay for a day or two letting M. Isvolsky know alternative proposal of declaration in Parliament.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 483, No. 482.]

No. 435.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, June 29, 1907.*

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 113.)

D. 7.2 P.M.

R. 8 P.M.

Persian Convention.

I thought I would after all make one more attempt to move Minister for Foreign Affairs to accept desired insertion in Preamble, and I used all the arguments in your telegram No. 93, and those I had formerly given him. He said that he was not afraid that Russian Government would be bound, but he did fear that the insertion would raise objections from third Powers, and he repeated what he had said in his *aide-mémoire*.

He wished that as far as other Powers were concerned, no objections whatever could be raised to our Convention. Seeing that great delay, at any rate, would be incurred, and that it was possible that serious obstacles might arise to a successful termination of negotiations, I told him that we did not wish to be irreconcilable, and would meet his wishes, but that if the Convention were opposed in Parliament you would make a statement, of which I gave him the general sense, and I underlined last phrase as to our having no reason to believe that maintenance of *status quo* would cause difficulties between the two Governments.

He expressed his concurrence, but asked if he might have the general sense in writing. I told him I was not prepared to give it to him just now, but possibly I might do so later in a private letter. Would you have any objection to my doing so? I said that I would give him a reply to his *aide-mémoire* very shortly, and I venture to send in another telegram proposed draft reply.

He was immensely relieved at concession we made, and promised to hasten on the termination of our affairs.

No. 436.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, June 29, 1907.*

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 114.)

D. 7.2 P.M.

R. 7.45 P.M.

Meshed-Seistan telegraph line.

I told Minister for Foreign Affairs that we would not insist on complete control in Russian sphere if Russian Government adopted a friendly attitude as to the prolongation of our other telegraph Concessions. I said that I would reply shortly to his last Memorandum on the subject.⁽¹⁾ He appeared not to be unwilling to accept condition I had mentioned.

Is his proposed draft as to the transfer of the two telegraph lines considered acceptable?

MINUTE.

The India Office do not object to the junction of the British portions of the Meshed-Seistan line in the neutral zone. The question is to find a suitable spot. If we obtain the straight line as limit of the Russian Zone from Kakh to the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers we shall not lose by the surrender of the portion of the Meshed-Seistan line which lies within the Russian zone. In the question of the other tel[egraph] concessions we are ready to give up the Tehran-Khanikin section, if we can obtain the renewal of the Tehran-Ispahan section when we ask for the renewal of the other concessions lying in the British and neutral zones.

C. H.

E. G.

(1) [*cp. supra*, pp. 460-1, No. 415, where the substance of this memorandum is indicated.]

No. 487.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/871.

(No. 347.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 29, 1907.

R. July 8, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of an *Aide Mémoire* which I received yesterday from M. Isvolsky in reply to the memorandum which I communicated to His Excellency on the 24th instant, a copy of which I forwarded in my despatch No. 342, Confidential, of that date.⁽¹⁾

In my telegram No. 109 of yesterday's date⁽²⁾ I communicated to you the text of that portion of the *Aide Mémoire* which refers to the insertion of a passage in the preamble of the Convention concerning Persia relative to the special interests of Great Britain in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 437.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson on June 28.

St. Petersburg, June 27, 1907.

Le Ministère Impérial des A[ffaires] E[trangères], ayant pris connaissance de l'aide-mémoire de l'Ambassade Britannique du 10/23 juin,⁽³⁾ sur les affaires de Perse, a l'honneur d'exposer ce qui suit :—

Le Min[istère] Imp[érial] est tout prêt à adhérer à la proposition de maintenir dans le préambule de la Convention le passage se rapportant au commerce des autres Puissances avec la modification projetée.

Quant à la proposition du Cabinet de Londres de mentionner dans le préambule de la Convention l'intérêt spécial de l'Angleterre au maintien du *statu quo* dans le Golfe Persique, cette proposition, produite à un moment où les négociations semblaient aboutir, donne matière à de sérieuses objections. Elle est de nature à changer complètement le caractère et l'étendue de l'accord projeté, lequel, dans sa partie résultative, ne touche pas du tout au Golfe Persique dont jusqu'ici il n'a jamais été question dans les pourparlers entre la Russie et l'Angleterre. Une clause nouvelle, relative à une question politique dont l'importance ne saurait être méconnue et qui touche à des intérêts si complexes, rouvrirait la discussion et pourrait retarder la signature non seulement de la Convention sur les affaires Persanes, mais aussi celle des actes se rapportant à toutes les autres questions négociées. Il ne faut pas perdre de vue qu'en dehors de la Perse il y a la Turquie, à laquelle appartient plus de la moitié du littoral du Golfe et qui doit se considérer comme directement intéressée dans la question :—il y a également d'autres Puissances qui à coup sûr se croiraient lésées si un accord se faisait à leur insu. Il est très important d'éviter tout ce qui pourrait provoquer contre l'accord entre la Russie et l'Angleterre les objections de tierces Puissances. Il est incontestable que, dans sa forme actuelle, cet accord ne touche à aucun intérêt collatéral et ne saurait, dès lors, donner lieu à aucune protestation tant soit peu fondée; or, la clause proposée par le Cabinet de Londres ne manquera pas de susciter des froissements et peut devenir la cause d'un incident dans le genre de celui qui a suivi l'accord Anglo-Français au sujet du Maroc.

Toutes ces raisons portent le Ministère Impérial des A[ffaires] E[trangères] à prier instamment le Cabinet de Londres de vouloir bien renoncer à sa proposition de mentionner dans le préambule ses intérêts spéciaux dans le Golfe Persique. Il

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 477-81, No. 429, and *encl.*]⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 482-3, No. 431.]⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 480-1, No. 429, *encl.*]

est bien entendu, d'ailleurs, qu'en formulant cette prière, le Cabinet Impérial n'entend pas du tout nier ces intérêts ni exclure la possibilité d'examiner plus tard et à une autre occasion avec le Cabinet de Londres la question du Golfe Persique.

En ce qui regarde le tracé de la ligne de délimitation de la sphère russe, indiqué dans l'aide-mémoire de l'Ambassade, le Ministère Impérial se propose de revenir sur cette question dans une communication subséquente.

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 14/27 Juin, 1907.

No. 438.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 30, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

D. 11-11 A.M.

Tel. (No. 115.)

R. noon.

Your telegram No. 94⁽¹⁾ was received after I had seen Minister for Foreign Affairs, but I am now writing to him to propose insertion of new clause, and am urging him to accept it, pointing out that it cannot possibly raise objections on the part of third Powers, as it merely states fact as to which there can be no question; that it is not open to objections raised by him to former wording, nor does it expose Convention to the danger which he had indicated, and that it leaves our Convention on unassailable ground, and that it binds Russia to nothing. I also mentioned that many people in England would consider a (? Convention) in regard to Persia which made no mention whatever of the interests of England in the Gulf as defective, and would weaken favourable reception of our Agreement which it is so essential to secure.

I am confident that he would not have agreed to *status quo* clause.

With regard to French intervention I would venture to point out that at this moment it might complicate matters by introducing a third Power into the discussions which hitherto we have conducted exclusively between ourselves. Minister for Foreign Affairs might possibly demur to our having taken a third party into our confidence, and he might consequently feel himself at liberty to consult with Germany, and this might be awkward.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 484, No. 434.]

No. 439.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/371.

(No. 352.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 30, 1907.

R. July 8, 1907.

I called on M. Isvolsky by appointment yesterday afternoon and told him that I had communicated to you the objections which he had raised on the occasion of my interview with him on the 24th instant in regard to the insertion in the preamble of the Draft Convention regarding Persia of a passage relative to the special interests of Great Britain in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf. I explained to His Excellency that the passage in question in no wise bound Russia to take any action or laid any obligations upon her, nor did it do more at the utmost than ensure her neutrality supposing that Great Britain and any other Power had any discussions or differences in respect to the Persian Gulf. Moreover the passage was but the declaration of an incontrovertible fact, and amounted simply to a statement that Great Britain had especial interest in no disturbance of her present

position occurring in the Gulf. I could not see why there should be a difficulty on the part of the Russian Government to accept our proposal. Moreover I wished to tell him quite frankly that there was a considerable section of public opinion in England who would regard a Draft Convention with Persia which made no mention of British interests in the Persian Gulf as a defective convention, and a general acceptance of the agreement would be diminished—and this would be unfortunate.

M. Isvolsky said that he was well aware that Russia would not bind herself to take any action by subscribing to the preamble if amplified according to our wish: but that was not the point which rendered him averse to introducing the passage in question. I had intimated that the fact that Great Britain had a special interest in maintaining the *status quo* was an undoubted fact, but was it generally recognized? and what was precisely meant by the *status quo*? I repeated to him the substance of Lord Lansdowne's declaration in 1903 and also your views as communicated in your telegram No. 98 of the 27th instant.⁽¹⁾

His Excellency said that all this might be called in question by other Powers, Turkey or Germany for instance. His main objection however was, as he had explained to me on Monday last and as he had repeated in his *Aide Mémoire* of the 27th instant,⁽²⁾ that we proposed at the last moment to insert a clause which removed the Convention from the perfectly unassailable ground on which it had hitherto stood on to debateable territory. The Convention as drawn up gave no justification nor any excuse for any other nation to have a voice in the matter; it was, as I had said, a self-denying instrument between Russia and England, and it touched on no interests other than those of our two countries. The Convention in short was on a "terrain inattaquable," but now we wished to refer to regions where other Powers had interests, some secular others perhaps prospective, and we wished to affirm in a Convention with Russia and to which she should subscribe, that we had a special interest in maintaining the existing state of things. Did Turkey, in regard to Koweit for instance, recognize the existing state of things? Would Germany be pleased to see a formal assertion of British special interests in the Gulf embodied in an instrument which she had been assured dealt only with matters affecting British and Russian interests or their respective frontiers? We should be exposing our agreement to objections and complaints with he did not know what other consequences, and we should be leaving the safe line we had hitherto followed. He begged us not to insist on the clause or to make any mention of the Persian Gulf in the agreement. If we insisted he would have to reconsider with others the whole of the arrangement, and great delay at least would ensue.

I told His Excellency that we had no wish to be irreconcilable, and I went over again some of our arguments, while he maintained his point of view: and at length I said that in these circumstances my Government would be prepared to waive the request for the insertion of the clause but that, if the agreement were attacked in Parliament, as it was pretty sure to be, on the point that we had been discussing, you would have to make a statement on the subject: and that we would reaffirm the declaration of Lord Lansdowne in 1903, and explain that, as the Convention was chiefly concerned with the regions of Persia adjoining the respective frontiers, and was in the nature of a self-denying act, it was not considered appropriate to introduce into it a declaration respecting special interests in the Persian Gulf, which might be regarded as concerning other Powers, but that there was no reason to suppose that the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf would give rise to difficulties between the two Governments.

His Excellency said that he saw no objection to that and asked if I could give it to him in writing. I said that I was hardly prepared to do so as it was a mere sketch of the general sense of a statement to be made hereafter: but that possibly I might be able to let him have later the substance of it in a private letter.

(1) [v. *supra*, pp. 481–2, No. 480.]

(2) [v. *supra*, pp. 486–7, No. 437, *encl.*]

I feel quite confident that I should not have been able to move M. Isvolsky from his standpoint; and I am equally confident that a persistence on our part on the insertion of the clause would have in the first place suspended a continuance of the negotiations for a long period, and in the second place would have very possibly endangered their ultimate success. I had no hope of inducing M. Isvolsky to modify his attitude on this special question; and I had at one time thought that it would really have been preferable if at my interview yesterday I had not made a fresh effort to do so, but had spontaneously waived the point and thereby hastened and facilitated negotiations on other questions. But on further consideration and in view of your instructions and of the great importance which His Majesty's Government attach to the matter, I felt that I was bound to make one more effort which I regret to say was unsuccessful.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 440.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/371.

(No. 354.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 1, 1907.

R. July 8, 1907.

I have the honour to state that your telegram No. 94 of the 29th ultimo⁽¹⁾ arrived here subsequent to my interview with M. Isvolsky on that day, and although I had told His Excellency that His Majesty's Government would not, in view of his strong objections, insist on mention being made in the preamble as to the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf, it seemed to me that nevertheless I should communicate to him the amendment proposed in your above-mentioned telegram and endeavour to secure his adherence to the views of His Majesty's Government in their modified form. I therefore addressed a private letter to His Excellency of which I beg leave to transmit a copy. I endeavoured in my communication to explain the character of the clause as amended, and to indicate that its acceptance should occasion no difficulties. If I find that His Excellency still maintains his objections, I consider that it would be better to drop the question, as a continued persistent pressure would, I am convinced, serve no useful purpose, and might indeed create serious difficulties.

You were good enough to inform me in your telegram under acknowledgment that it was possible that the French Ambassador here might be instructed to intervene with the Russian Government in support of our request. I would respectfully beg leave to submit that the interposition of a third Power might give cause to complications. At the outset of my deliberations it was agreed that the discussions should be conducted in confidence (see my despatch No. 333 of May 29, 1906),⁽²⁾ and I have no reason for believing that M. Isvolsky has not loyally observed this undertaking. On the British side, beyond some very natural and general indications to the Japanese and French Representatives as to the progress of the negotiations, the details have not been divulged, and the discussions have remained the exclusive property of the two Governments. If at this moment M. Isvolsky were to learn that France had been requested to support a proposal from our side, I am afraid that he might consider that he was consequently at liberty to take counsel with and impart his confidences to other Powers, and there is no doubt that in that case he would communicate with Germany whose interests in regard to the point at issue he considers to be important. It seems to me most undesirable that inter-communication on the subject of the Persian Convention should take place between the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and Berlin, and I would respectfully urge that no

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 484, No. 434.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 237-8, No. 221.]

occasion be afforded for their initiation. M. Bompard has said nothing to me on the subject, and I feel confident that he would first speak to me before taking action. Were he to inform me that he was prepared to move, I would beg him to defer doing so until I had had an opportunity of communicating with you.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 440.

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

Mon cher Ministre,

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 17/30 Juin, 1907.

J'ai reçu hier soir un télégramme de Sir E. Grey proposant une nouvelle rédaction de la phrase concernant le Golfe Persique que je m'empresse de vous communiquer. Mon Gouv[ernemen]t propose d'insérer dans le préambule simplement les mots "Great Britain has special interests in the Persian Gulf." Je vous ai annoncé hier que par déférence à vos objections nous renoncions à notre désir d'insérer la phrase concernant le maintien du *statu quo*, mais j'espère que les mots que je vous communique par la présente ne souleveront pas d'objections de votre part. Ils constatent seulement un fait incontestable que personne ne peut nier. Ils ne peuvent exposer notre Convention à aucun des dangers que vous avez indiqués au sujet du maintien du *status quo* et ils n'engagent la Russie à absolument rien. La phrase telle que je la propose laisse notre Convention sur un terrain inattaquable et la Puissance la plus susceptible n'y pourrait rien trouver à redire ou qui pourrait la justifier à formuler des plaintes après en avoir pris connaissance. Du reste, comme je me suis déjà permis de vous expliquer il y a beaucoup de monde en Angleterre qui seront d'avis qu'une Convention au sujet de la Perse qui ne fait aucune mention des intérêts Britanniques dans le Golfe Persique serait une Convention défectueuse. et l'accueil favorable de l'accord en Angleterre, qui est tant à désirer, serait sensiblement affaibli parmi certains cercles politiques.

Je vous prie, donc, mon cher Ministre, de vouloir bien accorder un accueil favorable à la proposition que je vous communique et que je vous recommande chaleureusement; et j'espère que sous très peu nous mènerons à bonne et heureuse fin toutes nos négociations.

Veuillez, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 441.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, July 2, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

D. 2.26 P.M.

Tel. (No. 117.)

R. 3.40 P.M.

Persian Convention. Article I.

Text sent to me I notice in tracing of Russian line Ispahan is omitted. I presume this is a slip as we have raised no objections to Ispahan and the line would have to pass through it.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [In Sir E. Grey's reply, telegram No. 95 of July 2, it is stated that the omission of Ispahan was a "printer's error."]

No. 442.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, July 3, 1907.

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 118.)

D. 2.20 P.M.

R. 6 P.M.

My telegram No. 115⁽¹⁾: Persian Gulf.

I have received this morning a reply from Minister for Foreign Affairs to my letter.⁽²⁾ He says he has studied the new proposal with the sincerest desire to arrive at an agreement, but he regrets that the doubts expressed in his *aide-mémoire* are not removed. Although new proposal takes into consideration in a larger measure interests of third Powers, it does not remove principal objection which concerns the introduction into the Convention of completely new element, and which is foreign to the original aim. In fact, Persian Gulf, as a whole, cannot be considered as an integral portion, and still less as a dependency of Persia; the questions connected with it are of a complex nature, and touch very diverse interests, and it is therefore difficult to bring them within the scope of the proposed Convention. In formulating this objection, Russian Government do not wish in any way to ignore position acquired by Great Britain in the Gulf, and there is no objection to exchanging views later with His Majesty's Government on the subject. But, being sincerely desirous of arriving as speedily as possible at a definite agreement on the points which are objects of present discussions, he again begs British Government to renounce their proposal to mention in the preamble of Convention their special interests in the Persian Gulf.

I am afraid it would be to no purpose to continue to urge the question. I have done my best to bring him round to our view, but I am confident his objections will not be removed. He was with the Emperor yesterday, and probably consulted with His Majesty, and if we press matter further, we may block whole arrangement.

I should be grateful for early reply to this telegram.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 487, No. 438.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 490, No. 440, *encl.*]

No. 443.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/371.

(No. 359.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 3, 1907.

R. July 8, 1907.

With reference to my despatch No. 354⁽¹⁾ of the 1st instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I received this morning from M. Isvolsky, and the substance of which I telegraphed to you in my telegram No. 118 of to-day's date,⁽²⁾ regarding the question of British interests in the Persian Gulf.

I see no prospects of being able to overcome the objections of M. Isvolsky to any mention being made in the Convention of those special interests: and I must frankly state my conviction that a persistence in our request will have the effect of blocking for some time the progress of our negotiations, and unless we withdraw our proposal, of finally leading to a deadlock.

M. Isvolsky referred to the question this afternoon and reiterated the arguments which he had previously put forward. The only remark which I made was in reply to his statement that the Persian Gulf was not solely in Persian territorial waters, and I said that we might perhaps define the portion of the Gulf which bathed the coasts of Persia and which consequently came within the purview of the Convention. He said

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 489-90, No. 440.]⁽²⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

that this would be impossible to effect, and would not remove his objections; and I therefore abstained from continuing the conversation and said that I had referred the matter to my Government and must await their reply.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 443.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Saint-Petersbourg, le 19 Juin/2 Juillet, 1907.

Dans votre lettre du 17/30 juin,⁽³⁾ a[nnée] c[ourante], vous me communiquez une nouvelle rédaction de la phrase sur le Golfe Persique, que Sir E. Grey voudrait voir insérée dans la Convention à conclure. Au lieu de parler du maintien du *statu quo* dans le Golfe Persique, comme il le proposait avant, le Ministre des A[ffaires] E[trangères] de la Grande-Bretagne voudrait qu'il fût fait simplement mention des intérêts spéciaux que l'Angleterre possède dans ce Golfe.

C'est avec le plus sincère désir de parvenir à un accord sur ce point que je me suis mis à l'étude de la nouvelle proposition, mais je dois constater avec regret que les doutes, auxquels, selon mon opinion, donnait lieu la clause relative au Golfe Persique dans la rédaction précédente et qui se trouvent exposés dans l'aide-mémoire russe du 14 juin, ne me semblent pas dissipés.

Bien que la nouvelle rédaction tienne compte dans une plus large mesure des intérêts de tierces Puissances, elle n'écarte pas notre principale objection, celle qui a trait à l'introduction dans notre accord relatif à la Perse d'un élément complètement nouveau et étranger à son but primitif. En effet, le Golfe Persique, dans son entier, ne peut pas être considéré comme une partie intégrante, ni encore moins comme une dépendance de la Perse; les questions s'y rattachant sont d'un ordre complexe et touchent à des intérêts fort divers; il serait donc difficile de les faire entrer dans le cadre de la Convention projetée. Je n'hésite pas à répéter qu'en formulant cette objection, nous n'entendons nullement méconnaître la position acquise par l'Angleterre dans le Golfe Persique et que nous ne verrons aucun inconvénient à entrer plus tard, si l'occasion s'en présente, dans un échange de vues à ce sujet avec le Cabinet de Londres. Mais sincèrement désireux d'arriver aussi vite que possible à une entente définitive sur les points qui font l'objet de nos pourparlers actuels, je ne puis que m'adresser encore une fois au Gouv[ernemen]t Britannique avec la prière de bien vouloir renoncer à sa proposition de mentionner dans le préambule de la susdite Convention ses intérêts spéciaux dans le Golfe Persique.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

ISWOLSKY.

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 490, No. 440, *encl.*]

No. 444.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 99.)

Foreign Office, July 5, 1907.

D. 1'40 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 118.⁽¹⁾

We appreciate your efforts to obtain insertion in the Persian Convention of mention of our special interests in the Persian Gulf, which M. Isvolsky is unwilling to accept.

You should now inform him in writing that in deference to his views and to expedite the conclusion of Agreement we are willing to abandon the proposal for the

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 491, No. 442.]

insertion of the *status quo* clause in the preamble and that we take note of the statement made in his mem[orandum] that the Russian Gov[ernment] do not deny that Great Britain has a special interest in maintaining the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf.⁽²⁾

You should add that owing to public opinion in this country it will be incumbent on me to make a public declaration of our views on the situation in the Persian Gulf, on the lines of maintaining the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf, and to add that we have reason to believe that the question of the Persian Gulf is not likely to give rise to difficulties between us and the Russian Gov[ernment].

I will communicate to you later the terms of the proposed declaration.

MINUTES.⁽³⁾

In deference to the objections urged to any mention of the Persian Gulf in the agreement with Russia I propose to omit this. But the opposition are sure to challenge us upon the subject; they will probably make their acceptance of the Agreement depend upon our ratification of Lord Lansdowne's declaration; in any case we shall have to make some declaration; and I think therefore that this telegram should be sent, as Sir A. Nicolson presses a reply.

The actual terms of the declaration I will submit later;⁽⁴⁾ this telegram leaves us uncommitted with regard to Lord Lansdowne's words. Those words (which I enclose for reference)⁽⁵⁾ are, as words, very strong; in substance they do not amount to very much. I should prefer something with less menace and more substance. Meanwhile I should be glad to know, if this telegram, agreeing to the omission of the Gulf from the agreement and telling the Russian Gov[ernment] that we shall have to make some declaration and what the drift of it will be, is approved. If the Prime Minister, Lord Ripon and Mr. Morley agree to it, I do not think it need be submitted to the Cabinet, though the actual terms of the Declaration should perhaps be circulated when they are ready.

E. G.
4.7.07.

I quite agree to the telegram which it is proposed to send to Sir A. Nicolson.—With respect to L[ord] Lansdowne's Declaration I thought when I heard it made and I think still that the tone of the passage which I have marked⁽⁶⁾ was unnecessarily menacing and I hope that some phrases more in accordance with usual diplomatic language may be used in any declaration which may be made to Parliament now.

R.

I only wonder whether it is worth while to add the last sentence to the telegram to Nicolson. It will, I should expect, be deprecated by Russia as committing her in the way she fears with Germany—(almost as much as if the words of preamble had been retained). However, I don't press.

The Lansdowne declaration may be considered later, I suppose.

J. M.
4.7.07.

I concur in the telegram.

H. C-B.
4/.

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 488, No. 431. cp. p. 492, No. 443, *encl.*]

⁽³⁾ [These minutes accompanied a preliminary draft of the telegram, which was finally despatched in the form given above.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *infra*, p. 497, *Ed. note.*]

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced. v. *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 121, p. 1348.]

⁽⁶⁾ [The passage marked by Lord Ripon was the third sentence, relating to the establishment of a naval base or fortified port by any other Power.]

No. 445.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, July 6, 1907.*

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 122.)

D. 11.20 A.M.

R. 2 P.M.

Your telegram No. 99.⁽¹⁾

I suppose that Parliament will rise about the middle of August and that it is therefore important that Conventions should be concluded by the end of this month at the latest: in order to permit declaration to be made as to Persian Gulf I am urging Minister for Foreign Affairs to give me his reply as to Afghanistan as soon as possible and I will do my utmost to hasten on conclusion of Conventions and have told him we must terminate in three weeks.

I am a little afraid that I may not succeed in signing as soon as is wished and their Afghan proposals may give trouble. But if we are unable to publish Conventions before Parliament rises and opportunity for making declaration is delayed I would respectfully suggest difficulty might be got over by my stating in covering despatch to Conventions that in accordance with your instructions I had made a communication to Minister of Foreign Affairs to the following effect and then giving terms of declaration: and covering despatch would be published with convention.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 446.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/370.

Tel. (No. 102.)

Foreign Office, July 8, 1907.

D. 2.50 P.M.

Your telegram No. 122.⁽¹⁾ It is not essential that Conventions should be concluded before Parliament rises and will probably in any case be best that declaration as to Persian Gulf should be contained in a despatch from you to me or from me to you to be published with the Conventions. I am anxious to meet M. Isvolsky's wish to conclude the negotiations soon but there need not be any pressure from our side, which is inconvenient to him, so long as you are satisfied that there is no procrastination on his part.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 447.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/371.

(No. 369.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 9, 1907.

R. July 22, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of an *Aide Mémoire* which M. Isvolsky communicated to me yesterday and which proposes a new tracing of the Russian line in Persia in order to meet the views of His Majesty's Government.

I telegraphed the substance of the *Aide Mémoire* in my telegram No. 123 of yesterday's date.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

Enclosure in No. 447.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Le Gouv[ernemen]t Britannique ayant exprimé le désir que la section orientale de la ligne qui délimiterait la sphère d'intérêts russes en Perse, mentionnée dans l'art[icle] I du projet de la Convention sur les affaires Persanes, ne passât pas à proximité de la frontière perso-afghane et vînt aboutir non à Zulficar, comme cela a été d'abord proposé par l'Angleterre, mais au point d'intersection des frontières russe, persane et afghane, le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] est tout prêt à prendre ce vœu en considération et pense qu'une ligne se dirigeant à partir de Khak sur Khaf, Turbat-Schekh-Djami, et laissant en dehors de la sphère Russe Kuh-Benitak pour aboutir au point d'intersection des trois frontières, satisferait pleinement aux conditions voulues.

Le Ministère des A[ffaires] E[trangères] de Russie espère donc, que le Cabinet de Londres voudra bien apprécier l'esprit de conciliation dont le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] fait preuve en laissant en dehors de la ligne susmentionnée Kiariz et Kuh-Benitak et en renonçant à la voir terminer à Zulficar même, et consentira à accepter la proposition ci-dessus exposée.

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 25 Juin/8 Juillet, 1907.

No. 448.

India Office to Foreign Office.

F.O. 371/371.

India Office, July 20, 1907.

The Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of telegrams from the Viceroy, dated 14 and 19 July, relative to the Anglo-Russian negotiations as to the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf.

India Office, 20 July 1907.

Enclosure 1 in No. 448.

Government of India to Secretary of State for India.

F.O. 371/371.

Tel.

July 14, 1907.

Foreign Secret. Your telegram of 9th July, Persia, and Despatch from Sir E. Grey to Sir A. Nicolson, 6th June,⁽¹⁾ received with Political Secretary's letter of 21st June. Government of India much regret that it should not have been possible to retain any mention in preamble of Convention of British interest in maintenance of *status quo* in Persian Gulf, as this would have removed most of the doubts which they have felt as to advantages of the Convention. As regards revised proposal to take note of the statement by M. Isvolsky in a memorandum, His Majesty's Government have no doubt borne in mind remarks contained in Spring Rice's Despatch No. 355, from St. Petersburg, 26th October, 1903,⁽²⁾ to the effect that an assurance expressed in word or writing is regarded as only of temporary validity and liable to change with changing conditions, and that Russian Government believe Russian assurances are (?) sometimes accepted merely for Parliamentary purposes. The remarks of Sir Charles Scott in his Despatch No. 11, 7th January 1904,⁽²⁾ in reporting

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 465-8, No. 417.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Count Lamsdorff's conversation, are to the same effect, and indicate that Russian Government makes definite mental reservation as to permanence of any such assurance. We are unaware of reasons why Isvolsky declines to insert this clause in preamble, but his hesitation in the matter may, perhaps, be due to some such causes as those indicated above. We trust that if insertion in preamble is impossible, British interest in maintenance of *status quo* will be asserted in the most definite terms, and that overt measures, as occasion may offer, will be taken in Gulf to show that there is every intention to act up to declaration.

Enclosure 2 in No. 448.

Government of India to Secretary of State for India.

F.O. 371/371.

Simla, July 19, 1907.

Tel.

R. 3.39 P.M.

Foreign Secret. In continuation of my telegram of the 14th inst[ant]. Please see Spring-Rice's telegram of the 12th July⁽³⁾ reporting proposal of Russian doctor effecting quarantine arrangements in Persian Gulf. We now learn for first time, from telegram from Sir E. Grey to Nicolson, No. 89, of June 21st,⁽⁴⁾ copy received with Political Secretary's letter of June 28th, that Russian Gov[ernmen]t were to be informed that British objection to maintenance of sanitary station at Karez would be withdrawn, provided that Russia would agree not to interfere with British control over quarantine in Gulf. We are fully prepared, as already intimated, to provide for improvements in quarantine considered essential by Dr. Thomson, pending consideration of Sanitary Council's scheme, which we have not yet received. We trust that strong protest will be made against proposal of Russian doctor affecting our control at very time when Russia is ostensibly considering possibility of promising not to interfere with that control. In view of present incident, we venture with the greatest respect again to suggest that it is of utmost importance that the question of maintenance of *status quo* in the Persian Gulf including quarantine arrangements should form integral part of Convention with Russia. We have now seen M. Isvolski's objections to mention of Gulf, as reported in Nicolson's telegram of the 24th June,⁽⁵⁾ and we are unable to recognise their special force, for they would apply as strongly to mention of zone assigned to Russia, in which other nations have as large if not larger interests than in the Gulf. British and Indian interests are already paramount in the Gulf, and if construction of lower section of Bagdad railway is to form an object of British policy it is now more important than ever to maintain our existing rights and interests there.

Even at the last moment we would venture to point out that our conciliatory attitude towards Russia as regards Tibet and Afghanistan, and the fact that we have recognised as her sphere of interests most of Persia, while retaining in our sphere a very small area, most of which is incapable of commercial or industrial development, and that we voluntarily renounced the strong political position which we had secured at Tehran and elsewhere owing to the action of popular party, would appear to entitle us to require from her full recognition of our vital interests in the Gulf, especially as we now confine these to the coast only by drawing our line from Bunder Abbas. Russian refusal to recognise our interests in this matter, coupled with rumours from German source here that Persian Majlis is considering concession of Khanikin railway to Germany, and report that a start is being made on Bagdad Khanikin line, would lead us to fear secret understanding with Germany, tending to undermine our position in the Gulf and at Bagdad, and clearing up of situation might be (? far more) to our advantage.

(3) [Not reproduced.]

(4) [*v. supra*, p. 473, No. 425.]

(5) [*v. supra*, pp. 475-6, No. 428.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On August 8, Sir Edward Grey sent Sir A. Nicolson a despatch No. 295, which is printed *infra*, p. 554, No. 492. It contained as Enclosure 2 “a copy of the Declaration relating to British interests in the Persian Gulf which I propose to make in Parliament or in a published despatch to you, after the conclusion of the agreement.” This declaration was as follows:

Proposed British Declaration.

This Convention is limited to the regions of Persia touching the respective frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia, and the Persian Gulf is not part of those regions, and only partly in Persian territory. It has not therefore been considered appropriate to introduce into the Convention a positive declaration respecting special interests possessed by Great Britain in the Gulf, the result of British action in those waters for more than a hundred years.

His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that this question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments should developments arise which make further discussion affecting British interests in the Gulf necessary. For the Russian Government have in the course of the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of this Convention explicitly stated that they do not deny that Great Britain has a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf—a statement of which His Majesty's Government have formally taken note.

In order to make it quite clear that the present Convention is not intended to affect the position in the Gulf, and does not imply any change of policy respecting it on the part of Great Britain, His Majesty's Government think it desirable to draw attention to previous declarations of British policy, and to reaffirm generally previous statements as to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the importance of maintaining them.

His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the *status quo* in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade; in doing so, they have no desire to exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power.

This declaration, with some slight changes of wording, was sent as a despatch to Sir A. Nicolson on August 29, 1907. It was published in this form with the text of the Convention in *Cd.* 3750 on September 26, 1907. *A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, (*Cd.* 3750), p. 478. It is reprinted *infra*, pp. 501–2, No. 455.]

No. 449.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 12, 1907.

F.O. 371/371.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 143.)

R. 9 P.M.

Persian draft Convention.

I communicated to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day the Memoranda as to the rectification of proposed Russian line and as to the transfer of the telegraph lines.⁽¹⁾ He feared that proposal to leave Khaf out of the Russian sphere might give rise to discussions with General Staff. I employed necessary and obvious arguments, and impressed on him that we must urge very strongly acceptance of our proposal.

I found Minister for Foreign Affairs in an excellent disposition, and I feel confident that he will do his best.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 460–1, No. 415.]

No. 450.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/371.

(No. 418.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 15, 1907.

R. August 19, 1907.

I suggested in a private letter to Mr. Isvolsky that we should take steps to avoid any ambiguity occurring in the future as to the localities through which the lines defining our respective spheres of interest in Persia might pass. I pointed out to His Excellency that the Convention mentioned that the English and Russian lines passed

through certain localities, and it should be made clear, perhaps by a *note Verbale* which could be appended to the Convention, that it was understood that such localities were included either within the English or the Russian sphere, as the case might be.

Mr. Isvolsky remarked to me yesterday that he quite saw the point of my suggestion, and he would propose that in the Convention itself it should be stated that the lines passed through *and included* such and such localities. He would prefer stating this in the text of the Convention and not recording it in a separate *Note Verbale*, as in the latter case undue attention might be called to the fact and it would be difficult to avoid employing the phrase "spheres of interest," which it was desirable to suppress. Besides it would be better not to increase the number of annexes and other supplementary documents.

I told His Excellency that I quite agreed with him and I asked him to find a good French word for the equivalent of "included." I trust that you will concur with the insertion in the text of the Convention of the phrase proposed.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 451.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/372.

(No. 425.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 20, 1907.

R. September 3, 1907.

I gave M. Isvolsky on my return from London a copy of the proposed declaration which would be published simultaneously with the Arrangement concerning Persia, and which dealt with the question of the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf. I have the honour to transmit a copy of an *Aide-Mémoire* which I have received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs saying that that Department sees no objection whatever to the publication of such a declaration and merely rectifying the rendering of the Russian statement in respect to the recognition by the Russian Government of the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 451.

Aide-Mémoire.

Ayant pris connaissance du projet de la déclaration que le Gouvernement Britannique se propose de faire sur la question du Golfe Persique, le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères s'empresse de faire savoir à l'Ambassade d'Angleterre qu'il ne voit aucun inconvénient à ce qu'une pareille déclaration soit faite.

Le Ministère croit seulement devoir faire observer à l'Ambassade que la deuxième phrase du deuxième alinéa du projet ne rend pas d'une manière tout à fait exacte le texte du passage de l'aide-mémoire russe, remis à Sir Arthur Nicolson le 14/27 juin 1907,⁽¹⁾ relatif au point de vue du Gouvernement Impérial sur les intérêts de la Grande-Bretagne dans les eaux en question, et qu'afin de rendre cette phrase plus conforme au texte original il serait nécessaire de dire que "le Cabinet Impérial n'étend pas nier les intérêts spéciaux de l'Angleterre dans le Golfe Persique."

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 482-3, No. 431.]

No. 452.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 426.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. August 20, 1907.**R. September 3, 1907.*

I wrote a private letter to M. Isvolsky in regard to the form in which the several Conventions should be drawn up, and I told him that His Majesty's Government would wish that they should be signed by himself and me as Plenipotentiaries of our respective sovereigns and furnished with full powers. I said that as the instruments treated of questions of great importance and, in fact, laid down the bases on which the future relations of the two countries in Central Asia would in great measure be conducted, it would seem advisable that they should be cast in a formal shape. It was of especial importance that the preambles should be retained, and these, to my mind, would more naturally preface a Convention than an Arrangement.

M. Isvolsky, in conversation, had some doubts on the subject and subsequently embodied his views in an *aide-mémoire* of which I have the honour to transmit a copy.

I have telegraphed to you on the subject,⁽¹⁾ but this despatch will reach your hands after your decision has been received by me, and I therefore simply forward the document which M. Isvolsky has communicated to me.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 452.

*Aide-mémoire.**St. Petersburg, August 19, 1907.*

Dans la série d'accords qui ont été conclus entre l'Angleterre et la France, un seulement a été revêtu de la forme d'une Convention, celui qui concerne la Terre-Neuve et l'Afrique.

Il semblerait que dans les relations internationales entre deux Etats il ne peut être question de Convention que lorsqu'il s'agit de droits rentrant dans l'idée de la souveraineté. En effet, les accords anglo-français concernant les territoires susmentionnés, sur lesquels les deux Etats ont respectivement des droits souverains, forment l'objet d'une Convention, tandis que les actes ayant trait au Siam, au Maroc—Etats indépendants, et à l'Egypte—Etat vassal d'une tierce Puissance,—revêtent la forme de déclarations. Or, dans le cas actuel d'un accord à conclure entre l'Angleterre et la Russie, il est à prendre en considération que la Perse étant un Etat indépendant et le Thibet étant un Etat vassal d'un autre Etat indépendant—la Chine, les deux Parties Contractantes n'ont sur ces régions aucuns droits souverains dont elles pourraient disposer à leur guise.

Quant à la question du Préambule, sa présence n'implique pas inévitablement la forme de Convention et par conséquent l'obligation de faire ratifier l'acte international dans lequel il se trouve—à preuve l'accord russo-japonais qui vient d'être signé le 17 (30) juillet: il contient un Préambule et n'a pas été muni de la ratification Impériale.

Il n'y aurait donc aucun inconvénient à ce que les arrangements projetés, même étant qualifiés de déclarations, arrangements ou accords, conservent leur préambule, dont l'importance est incontestable.

D'ailleurs, au point de vue des intérêts de l'Angleterre et de la Russie, la préférence accordée à ces derniers termes sur celui de "Conventions" n'aurait aucun caractère préjudiciable, toutes ces formes ayant la même validité d'actes

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 299, No. 281.]

internationaux et engageant les Parties Contractantes les unes aussi bien que les autres.

L'idée de la possibilité de conclure une Convention dans les questions persane et thibétaine devrait, semble-t-il, être absolument exclue.

Une Convention ne pourrait à la rigueur être conclue que par rapport à l'Afghanistan, vu la situation spéciale de ce pays vis-à-vis de l'Angleterre.

Il est à noter en outre que les bruits ayant trait à l'accord anglo-russe rencontrent un intérêt très vif en Asie; sa publication est attendue anxieusement tant en Perse qu'en Chine, et si cet accord revêt la forme solennelle d'une Convention cela froissera certainement les susceptibilités légitimes des cercles gouvernementaux persan et chinois, qui pourraient prendre ombrage de la manière dont l'Angleterre et la Russie disposent de leur pays, avec lesquels elles entretiennent d'égal à égal des relations diplomatiques directes. Au contraire, une déclaration, arrangement ou accord, constatant purement et simplement la ligne de conduite que les deux Etats s'engagent mutuellement à observer dorénavant par rapport aux questions persane et thibétaine, n'aurait pas le caractère d'une atteinte aux droits souverains de la Perse et de la Chine et n'entraînerait pas de suites défavorables au point de vue politique.

Saint Pétersbourg, le 6 [19] août, 1907.

No. 453.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/372.

(No. 428.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 26, 1907.

R. September 3, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit, herewith, an *Aide-Mémoire*, which M. Isvolsky handed to me on the 24th instant, regarding the cession to the Russian⁽¹⁾ Government of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line and stating that the Russian Government have no objection to the prolongation for 20 years of the concessions of the telegraph lines Teheran-Boushir, Jask-Gwaddar, and Kachan-Robat.

I presume that no steps will be taken at Teheran in regard to the latter question until the Agreements between His Britannic Majesty's Government and that of Russia have been signed.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 453.

Aide-mémoire.

St. Petersburg, August 24, 1907.

Le Gouvernement Impérial accepte en principe la cession à la Russie des droits dont le Gouvernement Britannique dispose sur la ligne télégraphique Téhéran-Khanikin, ainsi que cela est projeté dans l'aide-mémoire de l'Ambassade Britannique du 10/23 juin 1907,⁽²⁾ et ne trouve pas d'objections à la prolongation pour une durée de vingt ans des concessions des lignes Téhéran-Boushir, Djask-Gwaddar, et Kachan-Robat.

Quant au côté financier de cette question, le Gouvernement Impérial se réserve d'entrer dans un échange de vues avec le Gouvernement anglais afin de régler cette affaire à l'amiable, aussitôt qu'il sera en possession des données exactes à ce sujet demandées dans l'aide-mémoire ministériel du 29 juillet dernier.

Saint-Pétersbourg, ce 10/24 août, 1907.

⁽¹⁾ [In original "Persian," corrected to "Russian" by Sir E. Grey.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 480-1, No. 429, *encl.*]

No. 454.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, August 29, 1907.*

F.O. 371/320.

D. 2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 175.)

R. 4 P.M.

Anglo-Russian Convention.

... (1) Exchange of Telegraph lines in Persia. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] agrees with your views. We have arranged that arrangement as to the exchange of telegraph lines should be a separate document not to be published with or appended to convention and to be termed Arrangement. It would be clumsy to make a note of it. An additional sentence as to the two representatives later approaching Persian Government will be inserted. Both His Excellency and I will sign arrangement and it will not be published until consent of Persian government has been obtained. I have given all information as to Tehran-Meshed line and he made no remarks. I did not invite any. Of course arrangement will be signed simultaneously with convention. (2)

I have given him a memorandum taking note of his memorandum as to the prolongation of British telegraph concessions. (3)

Negotiations are now concluded. Final texts go to Emperor to-day for His Majesty's approval and we sign on Saturday.

(1) [The first part of this telegram referred to Afghan affairs and is printed, *infra*, p. 573, No. 512.]

(2) [Tel. No. 173 to Sir A. Nicolson of August 29, 1907, concurred "in proposed arrangements respecting change of telegraphs."]

(3) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 455.

*(The Persian Gulf Declaration.)**Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.*

F.O. 371/372.

(No. 325.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 29, 1907.

I have to-day authorized Y[our] E[xcellency] by telegraph to sign a Convention with the Russian Gov[ernment] containing arrangements on the subject of Persia Afghanistan and Thibet.

The arrangement respecting Persia is limited to the regions of that country touching the respective frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia, and the Persian Gulf is not part of those regions, and is only partly in Persian territory. It has not therefore been considered appropriate to introduce into the Convention a positive declaration respecting special interests possessed by Great Britain in the Gulf, the result of British action in those waters for more than a hundred years.

His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that this question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments should developments arise which make further discussion affecting British interests in the Gulf necessary. For the Russian Government have in the course of the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of this arrangement explicitly stated that they do not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf⁽¹⁾—a statement of which His Majesty's Government have formally taken note.

(1) [*cp. supra*, p. 498, No. 451, *encl.* (*cp.* p. 497, *Ed. note.*) v. also the following references to the Declaration on the Persian Gulf in the debate in the House of Lords in 1908, *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Vol. 183, Lord Curzon, pp. 1010-3; Lord Fitzmaurice, pp. 1038-9; Lord Sanderson, pp. 1309-11; Lord Lansdowne, pp. 1327-8; Lord Crewe, pp. 1339-40.]

In order to make it quite clear that the present arrangement is not intended to affect the position in the Gulf, and does not imply any change of policy respecting it on the part of Great Britain, His Majesty's Government think it desirable to draw attention to previous declarations of British policy, and to reaffirm generally previous statements as to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the importance of maintaining them.

His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the *status quo* in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade; in doing so, they have no desire to exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

No. 456.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 445.)

St. Petersburg, D. August 31, 1907.

Sir,

R. September 3, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit, herewith, the Convention which was signed to-day by M. Isvolsky and myself for the settlement of certain questions affecting the interests of Great Britain and Russia in Asia.

I also beg leave to forward a note which I received from M. Isvolsky, in response to a communication from me, of which a copy is herewith enclosed, on the subject of the entry of scientific missions into Thibet.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 456.

Convention.

Sa Majesté le Roi du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande et des Territoires Britanniques au delà des mers, Empereur des Indes, et Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, animés du sincère désir de régler d'un consentement mutuel différentes questions touchant aux intérêts de Leurs Etats sur le continent Asiatique, ont résolu de conclure des accords destinés à prévenir toute cause de malentendus entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie par rapport aux dites questions et ont nommé à cet effet pour Leurs Plénipotentiaires respectifs—savoir :

Sa Majesté le Roi du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande et des Territoires Britanniques au delà des mers, Empereur des Indes :

le Très Honorable Sir Arthur Nicolson, son Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire près Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies :

le Maître de Sa Cour Alexandre Isvolsky, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères.

lesquels, après s'être communiqué leurs pleins pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus de ce qui suit :

Arrangement concernant la Perse.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse et désirant sincèrement la préservation de l'ordre dans toute l'étendue de ce pays et son développement pacifique, aussi bien que l'établissement permanent d'avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les autres nations ;

considérant que chacun d'eux a, pour des raisons d'ordre géographique et économique, un intérêt spécial au maintien de la paix et de l'ordre dans certaines

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 354-5, No. 318 (b).]

provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière Russe, d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Beloudjistan, de l'autre; et étant désireux d'éviter tout motif de conflit entre leurs intérêts respectifs dans les provinces persanes dont il a été fait mention plus haut;

se sont mis d'accord sur les termes suivants :

I.

La Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets britanniques, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemins de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance, &c.—au delà d'une ligne allant de Kasri-Chirin par Isfahan, Jezd, Khakh et aboutissant à un point sur la frontière Persane à l'intersection des frontières Russe et Afghane, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Russe. Il est bien entendu que les localités mentionnées ci-dessus entrent dans la région où la Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher les susdites concessions.

II.

La Russie de son côté s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets russes, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale, telles que les concessions de chemins de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance, &c.—au delà d'une ligne allant de la frontière Afghane par Gazik, Birdjand, Kerman et aboutissant à Bender Abbas, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Britannique. Il est bien entendu que les localités mentionnées ci-dessus entrent dans la région où la Russie s'engage à ne pas rechercher les susdites concessions.

III.

La Russie s'engage pour sa part à ne pas s'opposer, sans s'être préalablement entendue avec l'Angleterre, à ce que des concessions quelconques soient données à des sujets britanniques dans les régions de la Perse situées entre les lignes mentionnées dans les articles I et II.

La Grande-Bretagne prend un engagement identique en ce qui concerne des concessions à donner à des sujets russes dans les mêmes régions de la Perse.

Toutes les concessions existant actuellement dans les régions désignées dans les articles I et II sont maintenues.

IV.

Il est entendu que les revenus de toutes les douanes persanes, à l'exception de celles du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, revenus garantissant l'amortissement et les intérêts des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement, seront affectés au même but que par le passé.

Il est également entendu que les revenus des douanes persanes du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, aussi bien que ceux des pêcheries sur le littoral persan de la mer Caspienne et ceux des Postes et Télégraphes seront affectés comme par le passé au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah à la Banque Impériale de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement.

V.

En cas d'irrégularités dans l'amortissement ou le paiement des % % des emprunts persanes conclus à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse et à la

Banque Impériale de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement, et si la nécessité se présente pour la Russie d'instituer un contrôle sur des sources de revenus garantissant le service régulier des emprunts conclus à la première des dites Banques et situées dans la région mentionnée dans l'article II du présent arrangement, ou pour la Grande Bretagne d'instituer un contrôle sur des sources de revenus garantissant le service régulier des emprunts conclus à la seconde des dites Banques et situées dans la région mentionnée dans l'article I du présent arrangement, les Gouvernements Anglais et Russe s'engagent à entrer préalablement dans un échange d'idées amical en vue de déterminer d'un commun accord les mesures de contrôle en question et d'éviter toute ingérence qui ne serait pas conforme aux principes servant de base au présent arrangement.

Conventions concernant l'Afghanistan (v. infra, pp. 541-4, No. 483) et le Thibet (v. supra, pp. 352-4, No. 317).

La présente convention sera ratifiée et les ratifications en seront échangées à St. Pétersbourg aussitôt que faire se pourra.⁽²⁾

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé la présente Convention et y ont apposé leurs cachets.

Fait à St. Pétersbourg, en double expédition, le 18/31 Août 1907.

A. NICOLSON.
(L.S.)

ISWOLSKY.
(L.S.)

⁽²⁾ [Ratifications were exchanged on September 23. A formal communication of the text was made to the Great Powers and Persia on the 24th, to China on the 25th. It was published on the 26th. A substantially accurate summary had appeared in the Russian newspaper the "Retch" on September 19. The full text is printed in *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 100, (1911), pp. 555-60, and is reproduced *infra*, pp. 618-20, Appendix I.]

No. 457.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/372.

Foreign Office, September 16, 1907.

Tel. (No. 118.)

D. 4.15 P.M.

Your Telegram No. 263.⁽²⁾

We shall communicate the Agreement to the Great Powers confidentially two or three days before publication which will probably take place on 26th inst[ant].

You may communicate it to the Persian Gov[ernment] on the 24th if your Russian Colleague receives similar instructions and at the same time inform the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that there is no secret clause.

We presume you have com[munica]ted summary telegraphed to you on Sept[ember] 7. (No. 108.)⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Repeated to St. Petersburg as No. 193 of September 16, 1907, D. 4.15 P.M. with the following addition "Ask Russian Government to give similar instructions to their Minister at Tehran."]

⁽²⁾ [In Tel. No. 263 of September 15, 1907, Sir C. Spring-Rice emphasized the suspicion in which the Agreement was held in Persia, and suggested that an early and formal communication would have a pacifying effect, and preclude the possibility of German action.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 458.

Foreign Office to India Office.

F.O. 371/312.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 19, 1907.

I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst[ant] requesting his opinion as to the answer to be returned to an enquiry made by the Gov[ernmen]t of India concerning the effect of the new Anglo-Russian Arrangement respecting Persia on the rights of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in the matter of railway construction in the southern part of that country under the pledge given by Shah Nasr-ed-Din in 1888 and confirmed by the late Shah in 1900.

I am to inform you in reply that the Arrangement would clearly prevent H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] from constructing a railway line as far as Tehran but that, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, the wording of the pledge given by Nasr-ed-Din Shah in 1888 would justify them in asking to be allowed to construct a line in Southern Persia, should they desire to do so, in the event of the Russian Government obtaining a concession to construct one in the north.

The Gov[ernmen]t of India will doubtless not overlook the fact that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t have undertaken, by the new Arrangement, not to oppose concessions supported by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in the British sphere, nor, without previous discussion with H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], in the neutral zone either, and that the position of Great Britain is therefore stronger in this respect at present than it was before the signature of the Convention.

I am, &c.

LOUIS MALLET

No. 459.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/373.

(No. 215.)

Sir,

*Gulahek, D. September 24, 1907.**R. October 28, 1907.*

As I had the honour to report in my Telegram No. 277⁽¹⁾ I this day communicated to the Persian Government the text of the Anglo-Russian Agreement to which I attached a Persian translation—"non garantie"—drawn up in concert with my Russian colleague. I transmit to you herewith copy of the covering letter, which I sent with the text to the Persian Government, with the concurrence of Monsieur de Hartwig.

The latter was of opinion that we should state verbally, rather than in writing, that there were no secret clauses to the Treaty, holding that a written affirmation might create a precedent by which parties other than those signatory to any future Treaties might expect a similar declaration by the Contracting Powers, and declare themselves dissatisfied if it were not forthcoming. In this view, as reported in my above-mentioned Telegram, I concurred.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Enclosure in No. 459.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sad-ud-Dowleh.

Monsieur le Ministre,

Téhéran, le 24 Septembre, 1907.

Conformément aux instructions que j'ai reçues de mon Gouvernement, j'ai l'honneur de vous transmettre ci-joint, le texte de l'Arrangement du 18/31 Août,

(¹) Not reproduced. It gives the substance of the above despatch in shorter form.]

1907, intervenu entre La Grande-Bretagne et la Russie. en tant que cet Arrangement a trait à des matières pouvant intéresser le Gouvernement Persan.

Pour faciliter la lecture de ce document j'ai annexé au texte français une traduction persane *non garantie* de l'Arrangement.

Afin d'éviter tout malentendu, je crois devoir ajouter qu'il est bien entendu que c'est le texte français qui fait foi.

Le texte de l'Arrangement sera officiellement communiqué aux Grandes Puissances, et la publication en aura lieu dans le plus bref délai.

Veuillez, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

No. 460.

Foreign Office to India Office.

F.O. 371/372.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 25, 1907.

With reference to I[ndia] O[ffice] letter of Aug[ust] 24 relative to the projected transfer of the respective British and Russian rights over the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Seistan telegraph lines, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to tr[ansmit] to you herewith copy of a despatch from H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at St. Petersburg forwarding the draft of a telegram which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t propose to address to their Minister at Tehran giving the reasons which have prompted the transaction, and instructing him to confer with H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister as to the measures to be adopted with a view to obtain the consent of the Persian Gov[ernmen]t to its accomplishment.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are, as you are aware, still awaiting certain inform[atio]n which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t have promised to supply regarding the nature of their control over the Meshed-Seistan line, which, when received will be at once communicated to you but I am to state that it did not appear to Sir E. Grey to be necessary to delay an expression of his concurrence with the terms of the draft instructions, which the Persian Gov[ernmen]t were anxious to receive as soon as possible, until he was in possession of these details and he accordingly intimated his agreement in them to Sir A. Nicolson by telegraph on the 22nd inst[ant].

I am further to state that, if Mr. Secretary Morley concurs, Sir E. Grey proposes to furnish Sir C. Spring-Rice at once with instructions similar to those which his Russian colleague has received on the subject.

I am, &c.

LOUIS MALLET.

No. 461.

India Office to Foreign Office.

F.O. 371/372.

Sir,

India Office, September 25, 1907.

In reply to your letter No. 29521, dated the 13th September, 1907, ⁽¹⁾ I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley will be glad if Secretary Sir E. Grey will send instructions, as proposed, to H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister at Tehran to approach the Persian Government with a view to the renewal of the concessions granted to the

(1) [Not reproduced as its tenour is indicated.]

Indo-European Telegraph Department for the Tehran-Bushire, Jask-Gwadur, and Kashan-Rohat lines. it being left to Sir C. Spring-Rice to choose the best moment for acting on them.

I am, &c.

COLIN G. CAMPBELL.

No. 462.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 468.) Confidential.

Paris, D. September 25, 1907.

Sir,

R. September 27, 1907.

With reference to my despatch No. 464 of yesterday⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to inform you that when I communicated to the Political Director at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs the documents concerning the Conventional Agreement between England and Russia he observed "So I see you have made a declaration on the subject of the Persian Gulf, which was not mentioned in the summary of the Convention which you showed to me a short time ago."

I replied "Yes; the publication of the despatch to Sir A. Nicolson⁽²⁾ is a sort of *avis au lecteur*.' Nobody can in future plead ignorance of our attitude in regard to the Persian Gulf."

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

(¹) [In his despatch, No. 464 of September 24, 1907, Sir F. Bertie reports that he has communicated to M. Louis the text of the Anglo-Russian Convention and informed him of the position as regards the Persian Gulf, and scientific missions in Thibet.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 501-2, No. 455.]

No. 463.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, December 25, 1907.

F.O. 371/374.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 267.)

R. 9.20 P.M.

Persia. Mr. Marling's tel[egram] No. 412.⁽¹⁾

Min[iste]r for For[eign] Aff[air]s has received identic telegram. He does not see what action the two Gov[ernmen]ts can take at present juncture. Russian Gov[ernmen]t desire that order and calm sh[ou]ld be restored and they are comparatively indifferent as to what Gov[ernmen]t is established or which Shah reigns, so long as above essential conditions are secured. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] thinks it best to await events; and he again impressed on me desire of Russian Gov[ernmen]t to abstain from any military intervention.

He spoke today to German Amb[assado]r here as to action of German Chargé d'Aff[aire]s. German Amb[assado]r denied that Chargé d'Aff[aire]s had taken any action beyond attending Assembly for the sake of information; and added that he had heard that British, Russian and French representatives had intervened for purpose of obtaining privileges in return for effecting an arrangement. M[inister

(¹) [This referred to the dangerous situation arising from the quarrels between the Shah and the Mejliss.]

for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] categorically denied latter insinuation as being without a vestige of truth; and said that British and Russian representatives had intervened as representing Powers with the most direct and vital interests in Persia and solely with a view to endeavouring to arrange some *modus vivendi* between Shah and Assembly in order to introduce some peace and order. French representative, he said, had not intervened, though he had been very naturally consulted by his two colleagues.

No. 464.

Extract from Annual Report for Russia for the Year 1907.

(Enclosure in Despatch No. 57 from Sir A. Nicolson, D. January 29, 1908,
R. February 3, 1908.)

(I.)—*Persia.*

F.O. 3643/3643/09/88.

47. The condition of Persia and the increasing anarchy in that country caused much uneasiness to M. Isvolsky from the commencement of the year. Both Governments had agreed, if necessary and under certain conditions, to make a joint advance to the Persian Government, and the sums were held ready at the Russian and Imperial Banks. This joint advance was the first practical demonstration of unity of action between the two Governments in regard to Persia, and it may be said generally that throughout the course of the Persian troubles the Russian Government, both previous to and subsequent to the conclusion of the Convention, showed a loyal and sincere desire to act in close co-operation with His Majesty's Government. From the first the Russian Government were opposed to any military intervention, though they feared that the situation in the Caucasus and in Persia would act and react on each other. On the 7th March M. Isvolsky communicated a Memorandum on the situation in Persia, and suggested that the Russian and British Representatives should make an identic communication to the Persian Government warning them as to the necessity of supporting British and Russian interests. The return of the Persian Minister to St. Petersburg in May gave M. Isvolsky an opportunity of impressing on him the desire of the Russian Government to abstain from all intervention so long as the lives and properties of Russian subjects were not in imminent danger, and also to advise him that the negotiations with regard to Persia in no wise affected the integrity and independence of the country. During the whole of the year the news from Persia was occasionally alarming and always disquieting, but the Russian Government maintained their attitude of non-intervention and of close co-operation with His Majesty's Government. In view of urgent appeals from the Consular authorities, the Russian Government, as was the case with His Majesty's Government, felt it expedient to increase in some instances the number of Consular guards. Application was also made to the Russian Government from time to time by the Russian officials in Persia to cause preparations to be made for the dispatch of forces to the frontier, but M. Isvolsky considered that a military demonstration on the frontier might lead to serious consequences and possibly to an outburst of fanaticism which might endanger the lives of Europeans in Persia. In this view he was supported by the Russian military authorities, and it was decided by a special Inter-Departmental Committee that no movement of troops towards the frontier should be authorized. There was a strong disinclination on the part of the War Office and of the General Staff to undertake measures of the above description, and though there were one or two isolated instances of injury caused to Russian subjects and Russian postal couriers, the Russian Government continued to maintain a passive and a watchful attitude.

48. The question of a joint advance to the Persian Government remained dormant for several months, but on the 9th October the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Embassy that the Shah had applied to the Russian Bank for a private advance of £50,000, but that the Russian Government did not wish to meet his wishes without the co-operation of His Majesty's Government. The latter were, however, of opinion that they could not make an advance to the Shah without the consent of the Persian Assembly, and it was considered undesirable to take part in the proposed transaction. Later, on the 4th November, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the Embassy that the Shah had sent a most urgent appeal to the Russian Legation for an advance, as he was in dire financial straits and had not sufficient means to pay his personal guards, who would consequently desert and leave him defenceless. He had endeavoured to borrow money in the bazaars, but without success, and he was ready to deposit jewellery in the Russian Bank as a security for the advance. In these circumstances, M. Goubastoff stated that the Russian Government felt compelled to come to the assistance of the Shah, and had authorized the Russian Minister to meet the request of His Majesty up to 60,000 tomans, which might be increased to 100,000 tomans. This Embassy is not aware what amount, if any, was eventually given to the Shah, as no further communications passed on the subject. The two Governments came to an agreement to accept the proposal that a French expert should be appointed as Financial Adviser to the Persian Government, who were desirous of obtaining some advisory assistance from abroad in financial matters. The Russian Minister at Tehran had, in the first instance, submitted to his Government that the consent of Russia to this appointment should be subject to certain conditions. M. de Hartwig considered that the Adviser should not be engaged for the purpose of assisting in the establishment of a National Bank, nor should he occupy himself with foreign loans, nor take any action without previous consultation with the British and Russian Legations. These conditions were agreed to by the two Governments, but after some consultation between the Representatives of the three Powers at Tehran it was deemed advisable to modify these conditions in order to assure the assent of the Persian Assembly being accorded to the contract. It was therefore agreed that the question of the establishment of a Persian National Bank should come within the scope of the functions of the Adviser, and that the general letter of instructions which should be furnished by the French Government to the Financial Adviser should deal with the question of his relations with the British and Russian Legations. M. Bizot was selected by the French Government for the post in question, but the appointment has not, at the time of writing, been definitely made, owing to some delay having occurred in the reception by the French Government of the draft contract, and also to the latter desiring some amendments being introduced into it. The Russian Government are desirous of being made acquainted with the terms of the instructions which are to be issued to M. Bizot, but these apparently have not yet been prepared. The Russian and British Governments are anxious that the appointment should be made as speedily as possible, as there are rumours that efforts are being made by the German Legation at Tehran to procure the appointment of a candidate of its own.

49. The activity of the German Legation at Tehran has greatly preoccupied the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, as he fears that Germany may acquire a strong position in the capital and with the Assembly, and contrive to secure a predominant influence. He regards this activity as one expression of the dissatisfaction of the German Government with the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention, and as indicating a desire to cause both Governments as much embarrassment as possible. The result has been to fortify the desire of the Russian Government to act in the closest possible co-operation with His Majesty's Government. A sudden crisis which occurred at Tehran in the middle of December, and which at one time appeared to seriously threaten the personal safety of the Shah, gave occasion to joint action on the part of the British and Russian Representatives with a view to endeavouring to establish some *modus vivendi* between the Shah and the Assembly. The details of the

crisis will doubtless be related in the Report from Tehran, and it may be sufficient to mention that the Russian Government readily approved of the steps taken by the two Representatives, and showed every desire to work cordially with the British Government. The Russian Government considered that circumstances might compel the Shah to seek refuge in one of the Legations, and they suggested that in such a case he should be protected by a combined force of British and Russian guards. To this His Majesty's Government agreed, and proposed that if the Shah did take refuge, and if subsequently adequate guarantees were given for his personal safety, and if he were permitted to leave the country, that on those conditions he might be surrendered to the Persian authorities. The Russian Government were, however, of opinion that no confidence could be placed in any guarantees furnished by the Persian authorities, and proposed that if the Shah were compelled to leave the country he should be accompanied to the frontier by a combined Russian and British escort. This proposal received the assent of His Majesty's Government, provided that the need was urgent and that the Shah had taken refuge in one of the Legations. An incident which arose with this crisis was connected with the extreme activity of the German Chargé d'Affaires, who apparently desired to play a prominent part in the proceedings. The Russian Government had made certain friendly representations to the German Government as to the inconveniences which were being caused by the action of their Legation, and, in reply, were informed that their Chargé d'Affaires had kept strictly within the limits of diplomatic reserve, and intimated that, on the other hand, the British, Russian and French Representatives were taking a very high line, and were endeavouring to utilize the existing crisis for the purpose of acquiring certain privileges and concessions. This insinuation as to the motives of the British and Russian Representatives was strongly resented by M. Isvolsky, who instructed the Russian Ambassador at Berlin to represent to the German Government that the two Governments were merely endeavouring to assist towards a restoration of order and tranquillity in Persia and without any ulterior objects; and he expressed the hope that the German Chargé d'Affaires should receive such instructions as would prevent him from rendering a question already sufficiently complicated and delicate still more embarrassing. It is believed that M. de Schön promised to send instructions to the Chargé d'Affaires to moderate his zeal. The Russian press warmly approved the joint action of the British and Russian Governments and applauded it as a sign that the Convention was already bearing fruit, and remarked that this instrument had been concluded at an opportune moment, as, if the former relations between the two Powers had continued to exist, the Persian crisis might have had effects of more than a local character.

(J.)—*Turco-Persian Frontier.*

50. The aggressive acts of the Turkish troops and their incursions into Persian territory necessitated some discussions between the Russian and British Governments as to the best course to pursue towards the attainment of a joint and peaceable solution of the frontier difficulty. On hearing that the British Consul-General at Tabreez had proceeded to the frontier, the Russian Consular Representative was also instructed to go to the locality, but he was in the first instance requested to confine himself to inquiring into the depredations which had been committed on the property of some Russian subjects, and to be careful not to consider himself as in any way concerned with the frontier dispute. Subsequently these instructions were modified so as to bring them into conformity with those issued to his British colleague, and the tenor of the language which he was to hold to the Turkish Commissioner, if reference were made to him, was explained. The Russian Representative at Tehran, in view of the effervescence in that capital in regard to the Turkish encroachments, was desirous that his Government should move the Sublime Porte to consent to the Consuls assisting at the meetings of the Frontier Commission *à voix consultative*; but, after consultation with the British Government

and with the two Ambassadors at Constantinople, the Russian Government, in accord with His Majesty's Government, considered that the Commission should be afforded an opportunity of endeavouring to settle the question by itself, and, should it fail in so doing, that then the two Governments might consider what steps should be taken for inducing the Ottoman Government to consent to British and Russian Delegates participating in the task of a delimitation of the frontier. The Russian Ambassador at Constantinople had reported on more than one occasion that, in his opinion, the Turkish troops intended to remain in the localities which they had occupied, and that there was no likelihood of persuading the Sultan to recall them. He was also of opinion that the Commission would accomplish nothing, but thought that there would be no harm caused by giving it a fair chance of endeavouring to come to an agreement, and that its failure to do so would strengthen the hands of the two Governments in urging later the Sublime Porte to entertain a proposal that the mediating Powers should be called in to assist. He was strongly of opinion that the suggestion at this moment for the participation of the two Consuls in the work of the Commission, under any conditions, would be inopportune, and would certainly be refused by the Ottoman Government. M. Zinovieff's opinion carries great weight with the Russian Ministry, and as it practically coincided with the views of His Majesty's Government it was decided to leave matters alone, and simply to do what was possible towards expediting the dispatch of the Persian Commissioner, who was tarrying on the road. The encroachment of Turkish troops and their occupation of certain localities had a greater importance to Russia than to Great Britain, for the Russian military authorities were of opinion that some important strategical points had been occupied by the Turks, which might in certain eventualities seriously hamper Russian military tactics and movements. This is too technical a question to be examined by a layman, but a Report (and I am afraid I cannot for the moment recall its source) was lately furnished to the Foreign Office dealing with the above point. Beyond, therefore, the considerations which influence the action of His Majesty's Government, there is, in the case of Russia, a special motive which will render her, when the moment arrives, desirous of taking what steps are possible and reasonable for obtaining a fair and just solution of the frontier difficulty. The Russian Government would be quite prepared to join with His Majesty's Government in exercising strong pressure on the Sublime Porte, by naval demonstrations or otherwise to admit British and Russian mediation. This question is being studied by the Russian Government and the result of their consideration will doubtless be communicated to His Majesty's Government. There is one point which is being carefully weighed and it is the following: The Russian Government fear that when combined pressure is placed on the Ottoman Government by the British and Russian Governments the Balkan States, and particularly Bulgaria, may hail this event as affording them an opportunity of pushing their aims and causing increased embarrassment to the Sublime Porte. I believe that the Russian Ministry is engaged in examining how to provide against this contingency, and to give the Balkan States clearly to understand that the action of the two Governments is limited to one object only. The Russian Government were convinced that Turkey in her recent action was benevolently regarded by Germany and felt that she could count on the latter's support. They had no proof that this was the case, but the persistency with which, in spite of all protests, Turkey continued her encroachments, which had the appearance of being the results of a carefully matured plan, afforded, they considered, clear evidence that it was not an Oriental but a Western mind which had originated and devised the programme. There were not sufficient grounds for this belief which would justify any representations, but the presumption of German inspiration has been noted down among the instances of Germany's desire to cause embarrassments to Russia and Great Britain in the Middle East. . . .

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFGHANISTAN.

No. 465.

Memorandum respecting Russia and Afghanistan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1728.

Confidential. (8029.)

Foreign Office, October 14, 1903.

On the 6th February, 1900, a Memorandum was received from the Russian Embassy, stating that, in view of the development of intercourse between the Russian dominions and Afghanistan, it had, in the opinion of the Russian Government, become essential that direct relations should be established between Afghanistan and Russia with regard to frontier matters. These relations would have no political character, as the Russian Government maintained their former engagements to Great Britain, and continued to consider Afghanistan as being outside the Russian sphere of influence.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 47,
February 14,
1900.

Lord Salisbury transmitted a copy of this Memorandum to Sir C. Scott, and instructed him to call Count Mouravieff's attention to the reports received from various quarters of the concentration of large bodies of Russian troops close to the Afghan frontier, which seemed at variance with the very friendly tone of the Memorandum, and to ask him for some definite information as to the nature and object of these military movements.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 51,
February 21,
1900.

Count Mouravieff gave Sir C. Scott distinct assurances that the only recent reinforcement of the troops in the vicinity of the Afghan frontier had been the dispatch of one rifle brigade of four battalions from Tiflis. He said that the rumours of great movements of troops emanated from quarters interested in creating an alarming impression.

India Office,
February 23,
1900.

The Viceroy of India, who was consulted by telegraph, gave his opinion that if the Russian proposal meant the establishment of a Russian Agent at Cabul. Her Majesty's Government had no alternative but to refuse. A Russian Commercial Agent would soon become a political Envoy. The control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan, the sole *quid pro quo* for the British subsidy and sacrifices, would disappear. The Ameer would attribute the concession to our weakness, even if he did not welcome it as placing him on an equality with European Powers, and as providing him with arguments for the establishment of Afghan Agents at St. Petersburg and London. A condominium at Cabul would produce the worst possible effect in India. The reasons given for the Russian proposal would not bear examination. There had been no growth of trade. The Ameer stifled it on the Russian side even more than on the Indian frontier.

India Office,
June 28, 1900.

In a later letter the India Office communicated despatches from the Government of India, in which they explained at some length their insuperable objections to direct representation of Russia by Agents in Afghanistan.

Lord George Hamilton was of opinion, however, that the wording of the Russian Memorandum left sufficient ground for assuming, in any reply that might be sent, that no more was meant than an invitation to Her Majesty's Government to concur in an arrangement for correspondence on frontier affairs of a local and commercial character between the Russian and Afghan authorities, on the understanding that political matters would be strictly excluded.

On this assumption Lord George Hamilton thought that Her Majesty's Government might entertain the consideration of the proposals, since the difficulties of referring to the Indian Government all local questions connected with the Russo-Afghan frontier could hardly be controverted.

⁽¹⁾ [cp. "Précis by Mr. Parker on the subject of Russo-Afghan Relations," *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. I, pp. 309-14, No. 377, *encl.*]

At the same time, the India Office inclosed copy of a letter written on the 21st February, by the Russian Political Agent in Bokhara, M. Ignatieff, to the Afghan Commercial Agent, and communicated by the Ameer to the Government of India. In this document M. Ignatieff expressed a sincere desire that his letter might be the first step towards the establishment of direct friendly relations between Russia and Afghanistan, and gave an assurance that the Russian Government had not, and never had had, hostile feelings towards Afghanistan. Reference was further made in it to the movements of Russian troops in Trans-Caspia, which had attracted attention principally owing to their coinciding with the reverses suffered by England in South Africa.

On the 4th July, Lord Salisbury wrote to Sir C. Scott that the moment did not appear to him an advantageous one for entering upon a discussion of the Russian proposal regarding direct relations with Afghanistan, and that it would be better for the present that he should abstain from mentioning it to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs unless it should be first alluded to by his Excellency.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 147,
July 4, 1900.

In November of 1900, Sir C. Scott received instructions to mention verbally to Count Lamsdorff the reports which had reached the Government of India regarding M. Ignatieff's communications with the Ameer's Commercial Agent, and especially the letter of the 21st February, copy of which he was authorized to leave with his Excellency; and to add that His Majesty's Government trusted that inquiry would be made into this proceeding, regarding which a complaint had been received from the Ameer, and instructions given to prevent the recurrence of such communications. In the event of these representations leading to any attempt on the part of Count Lamsdorff to reopen the discussion on the proposal regarding direct relations, instructions were given to Sir C. Scott as to the language he should use. This should not exclude altogether the consideration of some arrangement for the interchange of correspondence between the Afghan and Russian frontier authorities on matters of local detail, but should go no further than to say that, before endeavouring to sound the Ameer on the subject, Her Majesty's Government felt it would be desirable to have some more precise and definite explanation in regard to the method and channel of such communications as were contemplated by the Russian Government.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 286,
November 30,
1900.

On the 31st January, 1901, Sir C. Scott had an opportunity of calling Count Lamsdorff's attention to M. Ignatieff's proceedings, and of communicating a copy of the letter of the 21st February. His Excellency appeared quite unprepared for this information. He characterized M. Ignatieff's letter as highly improper, and so inconsistent with his well-known character that it seemed almost incredible that he could have either written or inspired it. His Excellency promised, however, to lose no time in setting inquiries on foot, to enable him to furnish the necessary explanations.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 38,
Confidential,
January 31,
1901.

After a period of eight months had elapsed without any further communication having been received on this subject, the India Office suggested, in September, that the time had now arrived for approaching the Russian Government with a request to be informed of the result of their inquiries, and His Majesty's Embassy at St. Petersburg received instructions in this sense.

India Office,
September 4,
1901,
To Sir C. Scott,
No. 244,
Sept. 11, 1901.

Upon Count Lamsdorff's return to St. Petersburg in October, Mr. Hardinge called upon his Excellency, who stated that he had for the moment forgotten the question, at the same time promising to furnish the desired information as soon as possible. On the 9th October a Memorandum was received by the Embassy. In this Memorandum, Count Lamsdorff sought to justify M. Ignatieff's action as having been based upon the Memorandum communicated by the Russian Embassy in London on the 6th February, 1900, and as having been provoked by the request of the Ameer's Agent for explanations respecting the movement of Russian troops towards the Afghan frontier. It further stated that, although M. Ignatieff's letter did not appear to furnish ground for complaint on the Ameer's part, he had been

Mr Hardinge,
No. 289,
October 9, 1901.

instructed to take the first opportunity of explaining to the Afghan Agent the exact purport of his proceeding.

Count Lamsdorff had not in his conversations reopened the general question of direct communication between Russian and Afghan officials, and it was not, therefore, touched upon by either Sir C. Scott or Mr. Hardinge. But, in October, M. de Staal, in conversation with Lord Lansdowne, raised the whole question, urging the necessity for such direct communication upon purely local and commercial matters; and in December the India Office represented the serious objections of allowing the matter to rest where it was, since the Russian Government might contend that their explanation of M. Ignatieff's conduct had been accepted as satisfactory by His Majesty's Government, and possibly further communications, of a kind not as yet clearly defined, might become a recognized practice.

Lord Lansdowne
No. 286,
October 24, 1901.
India Office,
December 4,
1901.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 91,
January 29,
1902.

In January 1902 Lord Lansdowne furnished Sir C. Scott, for verbal communication to Count Lamsdorff, with a brief review of the circumstances of the case and a statement of the views of His Majesty's Government on the general question at issue. They did not desire to contend that there was no force in the arguments in favour of direct communications between the frontier authorities on matters of local detail—a category under which M. Ignatieff's letter could hardly be said to come—but they held that, in view of their position as having charge of the foreign relations of Afghanistan, arrangements for this purpose could only be made with their consent, and proposals upon the subject would only be entertained by the Ameer if brought forward and recommended by them. Before attempts were made to frame any such proposals, it seemed essential to have more precise explanations in regard to the method which the Russian Government would desire to see adopted for the exchange of such communications, the limitations to be placed on them, and the means of insuring that those limitations would be observed. They would be happy to consider and discuss any communication from the Russian Government on this point.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 29,
February 3,
1902.

Sir C. Scott took an early opportunity of conveying these views of His Majesty's Government to Count Lamsdorff. His Excellency having let drop a remark to the effect that he had never quite understood why the external relations of Afghanistan were in the exclusive charge of His Majesty's Government—an arrangement to which Russia's acquiescence could only be deduced from a solitary admission by Baron Jomini—Sir C. Scott supplied him with a copy of "Russian Assurances with regard to Afghanistan, 1869-1885."

Sir C. Scott,
Nos. 36, 47, and
55, February 5,
11, and 17, 1902.

But in this and in subsequent conversations with the Ambassador, Count Lamsdorff showed a marked disposition to confine himself to an explanation of the tone of M. Ignatieff's letter, especially as regarded its reference to the South African war, and to avoid the larger and more important general question of direct communications. Sir C. Scott was, accordingly, instructed not to lose sight of this, and to inform his Excellency that His Majesty's Government could not, until they received more precise explanation as to the methods which the Russian Government would suggest for the exchange of communications, take into consideration any change in the existing arrangements.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 97,
March 24, 1902.

To this Count Lamsdorff made no reply.

To Mr.
Hardinge,
No. 278,
October 31;
Mr. Hardinge,
No. 347,
November 4,
1902.

Five months later, Lord Lansdowne, in a despatch which was to be forwarded to Count Lamsdorff in the Crimea, informed Mr. Hardinge that it was desirable that it should be clearly understood by the Russian Government that His Majesty's Government, while willing to consider the question in the most friendly spirit, would object to any change being made in the system hitherto observed without their previous consent, and would regard any attempt at such a change as a departure from the understanding between the two Governments, and a contravention of the repeated assurances of the Russian Government that they considered Afghanistan to be entirely outside the sphere of their influence.

Lord Lansdowne,
No. 14A,
January 21,
1903.

In one of his earliest interviews with Lord Lansdowne, Count Benckendorff referred to the question, and inquired whether a solution might not be found by

means of a "negative" understanding, under which certain matters should be specifically excluded from local treatment. Lord Lansdowne considered that a proposal of the sort was worthy of attentive examination.

In conversations with Sir C. Scott, Count Lamsdorff, after his return from the Crimea, promised an early reply to the considerations advanced by His Majesty's Government, and, on the 5th February, furnished a Memorandum to the British Embassy. In this it was stated that the views of the Russian Government upon the question were set forth in detail in the Memorandum of February 1900, and that, although it was not considered necessary to again enter into explanations on the subject, it must be laid down that the relations between Russia and Afghanistan must be given a straightforward, open character, which, naturally, did not exclude the possibility of sending Agents into Afghanistan in the future. Lord Salisbury had admitted the necessity of finding an issue from a position which was abnormal for two neighbouring States. After expressing the conviction that the establishment of the new order of things would have a beneficent effect on Russia's relations, not only with Afghanistan, but also with Great Britain, the Memorandum concluded by declaring that it was by no means intended to give a political character to the present question, and that the dispatch of Russian Agents to Afghanistan was not as yet contemplated.

Sir C. Scott, 1
Nos. 17 and 29,
January 17 and
Feb. 9, 1903.
In Sir C. Scott's
No. 31,
February 6,
1903.

This document was characterized by the Government of India as a repudiation of Russia's existing engagements regarding Afghanistan. They considered, however, that it was probably a piece of bravado, by which the Russians were endeavouring to cover the failure of their attempt to establish the relations they desired with the Ameer.

India Office.
March 23, 1903.

On the 24th March, Count Benckendorff called at the Foreign Office, and the question formed the subject of further discussion.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 66 A,
March 24, 1903.

Lord Lansdowne, after quoting the salient points of the Russian Memorandum, said that he understood that the Russian Government, while adhering to their engagement to regard Afghanistan as beyond the sphere of their political influence, contemplated the possibility of sending, at some future date, Russian Agents to Afghanistan, not for the purpose of establishing political relations, but in order to provide for an interchange of communications on matters of purely local detail.

He reminded his Excellency of the terms of the communication made by Sir C. Scott to the Russian Government on the 3rd February, 1902, but did not deny that a definite explanation as to the method and channel of the communications they contemplated might present considerable difficulties. His Excellency would recollect the incident of M. Ignatieff's letter, which could not be described as non-political, or as dealing with mere local detail. He was most anxious to guard against similar occurrences in the future, and suggested to his Excellency that His Majesty's Government might possibly be content to leave matters where they had been left by the Memorandum of the 5th February, provided they were given an assurance that, before any departure of the kind contemplated by the Russian Government was made, the question should be again fully discussed in all its bearings between the two Governments. His Majesty's Government were fully prepared to deal with the subject in a reasonable and conciliatory spirit, but they objected to a disturbance of the existing order of things, to the maintenance of which Russia was deeply committed, without previous consultation with them.

Count Benckendorff inquired whether this statement as to a new departure referred only to the sending of Russian Agents to Afghanistan, or to direct correspondence between Russian and Afghan Agents also. This, he believed, already went on and could not be prevented.

Lord Lansdowne replied that, of the two steps his Excellency had mentioned, the dispatch of Russian Agents seemed the more questionable. Before, however, giving a decided answer, he desired to obtain the views of the India Office on the whole question.

Inclosure in to
Sir C. Scott,
No. 74,
April 1, 1903.

A Memorandum of the above conversation was communicated by Lord Lansdowne to Count Benckendorff.

His Excellency, in a private letter, pointed out that he had received no instructions authorizing him to enter into fresh negotiations on this subject. He desired, however, to explain himself clearly upon two points. Firstly, to show the difficulty and consequently the danger of any precise definition of the direct relations contemplated. The eventual dispatch of an Agent to Afghanistan, although not actually in view, was but the natural consequence of the resumption of such relations. Secondly, to point out that Russia had abandoned direct relations spontaneously, and not by virtue of the Arrangements of 1872-73. She had done so under totally different conditions to those of the present day. Her abstention at that time was natural, but could not be considered so any longer. That two States should be immediate neighbours, and yet without direct relations, was obviously inconceivable.

In thanking Count Benckendorff for this communication, Lord Lansdowne observed that, although attempts to define the limits of direct relations undoubtedly involved the risk of raising difficult questions, it was more dangerous still to leave those limits undefined, with the possibility that the question at issue might some day present itself as one of fact rather than theory. From this point of view, it would be unfortunate if the two Powers were to start with a different conception as to the nature of those limits.

(Done
privately.)

In communicating his conversation with Count Benckendorff to the India Office, Lord Lansdowne suggested that the following might be made the basis of an arrangement with the Russian Government:—

Firstly, That Russia should give an assurance that she will take no steps towards the dispatch of Russian Agents into Afghanistan without previously consulting His Majesty's Government, and affording them an opportunity of discussing the matter fully with the Ameer and the Russian Government.

Secondly, That communications between Russian and Afghan local officials on either side of the frontier should be permitted, on condition that they are confined to correspondence of an unquestionably non-political character, in reference to matters of purely local interest.

Viceroy,
Telegraphic,
April 1, 1903.

The Viceroy considered that local correspondence, though not without danger, was feasible. Before, however, sanctioning its introduction, the Ameer should be consulted. His Highness would have good grounds of offence if he found that, without consulting him, we had made an Agreement with Russia modifying his obligations to us. Moreover, we had no indication of his wishes with regard even to the limited increase of communications desired by Russia.

The proposal relative to the dispatch of Agents was, in Lord Curzon's opinion, far more serious, and he deprecated any admission on the part of His Majesty's Government that Russia had, with or without previous consultation with them, any right to send Agents into Afghanistan. Should Russia, after consulting His Majesty's Government and being refused, nevertheless persist, the situation would be a very delicate one. He regarded the employment of Russian Agents in Afghanistan, whether commercial or not, as fraught with serious mischief, and tantamount to the rescission of Russia's engagements. Their dispatch could scarcely fail to compel the British Government to send, in retaliation, British Agents or Missions to the same localities.

Lord Curzon advised, therefore, that, firstly, the Russian Government should be asked to state more precisely the nature of the local frontier matters on which they desire communications; secondly, that they should be informed that, when this statement has been received, we will consult the Ameer; and, thirdly, that the proposal to send Russian Agents to Afghanistan should be challenged as inconsistent with repeated pledges, and as uncalled for by any change in the situation.

The position of the Ameer should, at the same time, be emphasized, and the Russian Government informed that we could not undertake to press him against his inclinations; also that he has never, though in constant communication with us, expressed the slightest desire for either of the proposed changes.

Lord Lansdowne agreed that, before any new departure was made in regard to local correspondence, it would be desirable to consult the Ameer. If the Ameer energetically disclaimed a desire to facilitate such correspondence, the position of His Majesty's Government would be considerably strengthened. His Highness might, moreover, have practical suggestions to offer as to the manner in which such correspondence, if permitted at all, should be regulated.

With regard to the question of Agents, Lord Lansdowne concurred in the view that the dispatch of a Russian Agent or Agents would have to be met by sending British Agents into Afghanistan. If this were explained to the Ameer, it was probable that his Highness would express his reluctance to receive either British or Russian Agents.

Lord Lansdowne now proposed, if the Secretary of State for India agreed, to address an official note to Count Benckendorff, explaining that His Majesty's Government have been in communication with the Viceroy in regard to the relations of Russia and Afghanistan; that, as to trans-frontier correspondence, Lord Curzon is prepared to consult the Ameer, whose concurrence in any arrangement that may be made is obviously desirable; but that, in order that His Majesty's Government may take this course, it is necessary that they should be in a position to give the Ameer definite assurances as to the character of the proposed communications and the channel through which they might be made.

The note might go on to say, as proposed by Lord Curzon, that the Ameer has never expressed any desire for either of the proposed changes, that His Majesty's Government believe that His Highness would object not less strongly than they do to the dispatch of Russian Agents to Afghanistan, and that they therefore earnestly trust that the Russian Government, which has apparently abandoned the idea for the present, will not revert to it.

The Viceroy concurred in the terms of the proposed note. But he suggested that it should be made clear that if the Ameer rejects the Russian proposals, we cannot undertake to compel him to accept them.

Information from the frontier, showing that the Ameer had forbidden his frontier officers to discuss official matters, not only with the Russians, but with our frontier officers also, showed that His Highness was unlikely to accept any new arrangement of the nature proposed. Lord Curzon considered that the note might therefore be strengthened, and that it would not be wise to even presuppose consent to frontier communications.

In a conversation of the 8th April, Lord Lansdowne informed Count Benckendorff that the matter was still under discussion with the India Office. He reminded his Excellency that the question concerned not only the Government of India, but also that of Afghanistan. It would be impossible for us to make an arrangement with regard to trans-frontier relations without the concurrence of the Ameer, and this was the reason why it was of such importance to arrive at a clear understanding with the Russian Government as to the scope and nature of their proposal.

His Excellency entirely agreed, and said that the object of the original overture on the part of the Russian Government had been to secure the co-operation of His Majesty's Government in bringing about a more satisfactory arrangement than that which had hitherto obtained.

In the meantime, friction had arisen between Russian and Afghan frontier officials owing to the alleged destruction of boundary pillars near Herat, and other minor incidents.

On the 19th May Sir C. Scott was instructed to propose to the Russian Government that one of the officers attached to the Seistan Mission should be sent

To India Office,
April 4, 1903.

Viceroy,
Telegraphic,
April 7, 1903.

Viceroy,
Telegraphic,
April 2 and 11,
1903.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 83,
April 8, 1903.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 116,
May 19, 1903

to the frontier to verify the facts and repair the pillars, and that the Russian Government should depute an officer of suitable rank to meet him on the frontier and co-operate with him in arranging a settlement. Sir C. Scott was further to suggest that, as the Ameer and the Governor of Herat recognized that difficulties of this nature could be most suitably dealt with through the medium of His Majesty's Consulate-General at Meshed, the Russian frontier officials should, pending other arrangements, be directed to adopt this channel of communication if such cases occurred again.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 150,
May 28, 1903.

This proposal was communicated to the Russian Government on the 27th May.

During June and July reports reached the Government of India that letters were being received by the Governor of Herat from the Governors of Trans-Caspia, Ashkhabad, and other Russian frontier officials. On the 7th June two Russian Turcoman sowars had arrived at Herat bearing such letters. The Governor had deferred his reply pending the receipt of orders from the Ameer.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 165,
June 22, 1903.

On the 22nd June Lord Lansdowne called the attention of Count Benckendorff to this occurrence, as indicating a desire on the part of Russia to establish a practice to which we took exception and could not pass by unnoticed. His Excellency returned an evasive answer.

To India Office,
June 28, 1903.

At the same time, his Lordship suggested that the Government of India should move the Ameer to protest against the passage of such communications and refuse facilities to the messengers bearing them.

Meanwhile, no answer had been received from the Russian Government to our proposals of the 27th May. Their dilatory tactics encouraged the belief that, while affecting to discuss the matter, they were endeavouring to establish locally the practice of direct communications.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 197,
July 8, 1903.

On the 2nd July Sir C. Scott inquired of Count Lamsdorff when an answer might be expected. His Excellency replied that the matter had been referred to the Governor of Tashkend.

Sir C. Scott,
Nos. 225 and
246, August 5
and 20, 1903.

On the 5th and 24th August Sir C. Scott again pressed Count Lamsdorff for a reply, but was met with evasive answers, the matter having apparently escaped his Excellency's memory.

In a telegram of the 8th August the Viceroy, after stating that the Ameer was complaining of the Russian communications with Herat, and the delay in setting up the boundary pillars, suggested that an officer should be at once dispatched to the frontier, without waiting for the Russian reply.

Viceroy,
August 8, 1903.

Viceroy,
August 12, 1903.

A few days later Lord Curzon reported that the Governor of Herat had been informed by the Governor of Trans-Caspia that, if no answer to his letter was received by the 12th September, a Russian officer would be sent to re-erect the pillars.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 246,
August 20, 1903.

Sir C. Scott was thereupon instructed to inform Count Lamsdorff that His Majesty's Government, acting on the invitation of the Ameer, would at once order a British officer to proceed to the spot, and co-operate with the Russian Representative.

Sir C. Scott,
No. 250,
August 21, 1903.

On the 21st August Sir C. Scott received a note from the Russian Government declining to accept either of the proposals made in our communication of the 27th May, and adding that they saw no reason to modify the views they had expressed on the 6th February, 1900.

Viceroy,
August 28, 1903.

On learning of this refusal the Viceroy suggested that the arrangements for sending a British officer should proceed, and that if the Russians declined to send an officer to meet him, or to make any proposals with regard to frontier correspondence, the Ameer should be invited to co-operate in enabling us to depute officers to suitable points on the frontier, and so prevent trouble. It might also be desirable to publish the whole correspondence that had passed on the matter.

Lord Curzon's proposal to proceed with the arrangements for the dispatch of a British officer was approved by His Majesty's Government.

To Sir C. Scott,
No. 156,
Telegraphic,
September 5,
1903.

Instructions were, at the same time, sent to Sir C. Scott to address a further representation to the Russian Government. His Excellency was to point out that

the Russian Memorandum of the 6th February, 1900, referred to non-political questions, but that questions relating to the maintenance of a frontier demarcated by British and Russian officers could hardly be included in this category. That, while ready to arrange with the Ameer's officials for the restitution of the pillars, the Government of India would prefer that, as they had been set up by British and Russian Representatives, the work of restoration should be done in co-operation with a Russian official rather than by an Indian official alone.

The Russian reply was delivered on the 6th October. It was to the effect that the refusal to consider the proposals of His Majesty's Government was due, not merely to the fact that the Russian views had already been stated in February 1900, but to the considerations then set forth as to the necessity for direct relations between Russia and Afghanistan. The question of the restoration of the boundary pillars did not affect the general position, and the Russian Government must reiterate their decision to follow the procedure indicated in their former communication, and considered the question definitely closed.⁽¹⁾

In Mr. Spring-
Rice, No. 320
October 6, 1903.

Shortly before the receipt of this communication a message had been sent by the Governor of Trans-Caspia to the Governor of Herat, informing him that the Afghan officials to be deputed for the restoration of the boundary pillars must meet the Russian officers on the frontier on the 1st (13th) October.

India Office,
August 7, 1903

In the meantime, not only had the full text of the letters addressed to the Governor of Herat by the Russian frontier officials reached London, but letters from the Ameer to the Viceroy had also been received, containing a sufficiently explicit statement of His Highness' views on the question of direct relations with Russia.

Lord Lansdowne considered that, as we had informed the Russian Government that it would be impossible to conclude any arrangement on this question without the Ameer's concurrence, our hands would be considerably strengthened if we were to communicate these letters to them, showing as they did the loyal attitude of His Highness towards us and his objections to the establishment of such relations.

To India Office,
August 14, 1903.

The consent of the Ameer to this step was obtained.

Foreign Office, October 14, 1903.

⁽¹⁾ [This appears to be the communication "peremptory in tone" referred to, *supra*, p. 184, No. 181 (b), and *infra*, No. 466. The text is printed *infra*, pp. 621, Appendix II. *cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, p. 223, No. 258.]

No. 466.

Memorandum on Russo-Afghan Relations.

(In continuation of Foreign Office Memorandum No. 8029 of the 14th October, 1903.)

F.O. Russia 1728.

Confidential. (8546.)

Foreign Office, December 11, 1905.

On the 5th October, 1903, the Russian Government concluded a lengthy correspondence with His Majesty's Government on the subject of Russo-Afghan relations, by affirming a definite intention to follow the procedure on the Afghan frontier which they had indicated in former communications, and by abruptly stating that they considered the question under discussion finally closed.

Mr. Spring-
Rice, No. 320,
October 6, 1903.

Mr. Spring-Rice summed up this correspondence—which extended over a period of more than three years—in one sentence: "Russia has notified her intention of sending, when she pleases, her Agents into Afghanistan."

Mr. Spring-
Rice, No. 326,
October 12, 1903

The tone of the Russian note was deeply resented by His Majesty's Government, the more so, as Afghanistan had generally been considered to be completely outside the Russian sphere of influence.

To Mr. Spring-
Rice, No. 334,
November 25,
1903.

A despatch, for communication to Count Lamsdorff, was accordingly addressed to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, indicating in full detail the

To Mr. Spring-
Rice, No. 305,
November 5,
1903.

attitude of His Majesty's Government in regard to direct relations between Russia and Afghanistan, in order that there should be no possibility of future misapprehension on the subject.

After a brief recapitulation of the various stages of the negotiations between the two Governments, His Majesty's Secretary of State referred to the peremptory terms of the ultimate Russian note, and to the persistent refusal of the Russian Government to co-operate in seeking for a solution at once convenient to both Governments and acceptable to the Ameer.

In such circumstances, His Majesty's Government felt that if any further proposals were to be made, they should proceed from the Russian Government; but His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires was instructed to inform Count Lamsdorff that, in the event of any frontier incident arising, owing to an attempt on the part of Russian frontier officials to force the Afghan authorities to enter into direct relations with them, the responsibility for any such incident and its consequences must rest entirely with the Russian Government.

The Russian Ambassador returned from St. Petersburg on the 7th November, 1903, and he gave Lord Lansdowne such very cordial assurances of the desire of his Government to come to an amicable understanding with His Majesty's Government upon this and other questions, that his Lordship was induced to believe that there was no immediate necessity for the intimation contained in the above despatch, and Mr. Spring-Rice was accordingly instructed, by telegram, to abstain for the present from communicating it to Count Lamsdorff.

His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg was afterwards instructed to express the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government at receiving these friendly communications, but he was at the same time to explain to Count Lamsdorff that the correspondence of the last three years had produced an entirely different impression of the attitude of the Russian Government. In order that Count Lamsdorff should be convinced of the justification of such a view on the part of His Majesty's Government, Sir C. Scott was instructed to furnish his Excellency with a copy of the despatch No. 305 to Mr. Spring-Rice. This instruction was carried out on the 4th January, 1904.

At the commencement of the Russo-Japanese war, Count Benckendorff expressed the opinion, in which Lord Lansdowne concurred, that for the moment discussion upon outstanding questions could not with advantage be continued.

In the beginning of February 1905, however, his Lordship had some further conversations with the Russian Ambassador upon the subject of Russo-Afghan relations, the tenour of which is recorded in the following letter (which was sent to his Excellency on the 17th February only in draft form), and in the subjoined despatch to Sir C. Hardinge:—

No. 466 (a).

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. Russia 1728.
Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, February 17, 1905.

In the course of our recent conversations you enquired of me whether I could authorise you to inform your Government that the policy of His Majesty's Government towards Afghanistan had undergone no change, and that our present negotiations⁽¹⁾ with the Amir did not portend any attempt to annex or occupy Afghan territory.

⁽¹⁾ [In recognising Abdurrahman as Amir of Afghanistan in 1880, Great Britain undertook to aid him in resisting aggression by any foreign Power, and granted him a subsidy of £80,000 a year. The Amir in return agreed to follow British advice in regard to foreign affairs. The arrangement was confirmed in 1893, when the subsidy was increased. On the death of Abdurrahman in 1901, his son Habibullah abstained from drawing the subsidy, and declined invitations to visit India. Accordingly at the end of 1904 a Mission under Mr. (afterwards Sir Louis) Dane, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, was despatched to Kabul to clear up the situation. By the Treaty signed on March 21, 1905, the agreements with Abdurrahman were renewed without alteration. *v. B.F.S.P.*, vol. 98 (1909), pp. 36-7.]

To Mr. Spring-Rice, No. 307.
November 7, 1903.

To Sir C. Scott, No. 370.
December 22, 1903.

To Sir C. Scott, No. 176.
April 22, 1904.

I replied that I was ready to give you an official assurance in the name of H[is] M[ajesty's] Government that their policy had undergone no alteration whatever, that they wished to maintain the same relations with the Amir as with his predecessor, and had no intention of appropriating Afghan territory or of interfering in the internal affairs of the country, but that they continued to claim that Afghanistan should remain free from the influence or interference of any foreign Power and that the Amir's relations with other countries should remain in their hands.

I asked Your Excellency whether, in return for such an assurance on the part of H[is] M[ajesty's] Government, you would be prepared to give me an assurance on the part of your Government that their policy and intentions in regard to Afghanistan also remained unaltered, and that they continued to regard it as wholly outside the sphere of their influence.

I understood Your Excellency to express your opinion that the Russian Government would find no difficulty in authorising you to give me an assurance that this is the case, and you added that the only change which they desire in the *status quo* is that arrangements should be made for the interchange of communications between the Russian and Afghan frontier officials on non-political questions of a local character.

I have much pleasure in informing Your Excellency that if you are able to give me in writing an assurance to the above effect, I am authorized to confirm, on the part of H[is] M[ajesty's] Government, the provisional assurances which I gave to Your Excellency.

[I have, &c.

LANSDOWNE.]

No. 466 (b).⁽¹⁾

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1728.

(No. 88.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 8, 1905.

The Russian Ambassador to-day reminded me of the conversations which I had had with him on the 15th and 17th ultimo as to the relations of Great Britain and Russia with Afghanistan. His Excellency informed me that Count Lamsdorff had considered the draft Note which I had handed to His Excellency on the latter date. It seemed to him to raise questions of principle which in present circumstances Count Lamsdorff did not feel disposed to discuss. The moment was one when it was necessary for the Russian Foreign Office to proceed with the utmost circumspection, and any new departure in regard to Afghan affairs would certainly provoke comment. The Russian Government preferred therefore not to reopen the discussion of questions with regard to which each side had already clearly recorded its views. In these circumstances Count Lamsdorff deprecated entering into anything in the nature of a formal Agreement between the two Governments as to the Afghan question, or raising officially questions of principle in regard to Afghanistan; but in reference to my statement that our policy towards Afghanistan had undergone no change and that our negotiations with the Amir did not denote any intention on the part of His Majesty's Government to occupy or annex Afghan territory, His Excellency assured me that the Russian Government also desired that Afghanistan should remain a "buffer State," and would therefore abstain from interference with its independence or integrity.

Count Benckendorff attached importance to the expression "a buffer State," and I said that it seemed to me an appropriate description of the position which both Governments desired to assign to Afghanistan.

I explained to His Excellency however that we continued to maintain the views which I had already expressed to him as to the political relations which exist between the Amir and the British Government. H[is] E[xcellency] said that he quite understood this, and that our conversation left the two Powers exactly where they were in this respect.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE.]

MINUTE.

I read this draft over to Count Benckendorff to-day.

L.

10.3.05.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rové]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *infra*, p. 535, *Ed. note*, and Sir Edward Grey's minute.]

A copy of this despatch was sent to the Russian Ambassador on the 11th March, 1905.

On the 2nd November last, the Ameer wrote to the Government of India complaining that a Russian officer had crossed the frontier at Patakisar and had attempted to communicate with the Afghan Governor. Further, that an Afghan sentry had been shot near the frontier, and his rifle taken by Russian soldiers.

The India Office suggested that an immediate representation should be addressed to the Russian Government.

Lord Lansdowne replied that, in present circumstances, it would be useless to address representations to the Russian Government, as they would certainly decline to pursue the discussion.

Foreign Office, December 11, 1905.

[*ED. NOTE.*—As the following despatches show, Anglo-Russian negotiations regarding Afghanistan were not opened until February 1907, although Sir Edward Grey had authorised them on September 7, 1906, at the same time as those relating to Persia, *v. supra*, p. 389, No. 341.]

No. 467.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 58.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 30, 1907.

R. February 4, 1907.

I asked M. Isvolsky to-day if the Committee which he had informed me was to meet in order to examine the questions in regard to which we were treating had yet assembled. His Excellency said that the Committee had not yet commenced its sittings, but that it would do so very shortly.

I have not hitherto communicated to M. Isvolsky the proposals which I am instructed to lay before him in regard to Afghanistan⁽¹⁾; but it has occurred to me that perhaps it might be of advantage that the Committee should be placed in possession of them. It seems to me that it would be well to utilize the presence of Count Benckendorff here, in order that he may assist in removing the opposition which in some quarters undoubtedly exists against an understanding between the two Countries, and I think that he should be fully informed of our views, as he will attend the sittings of the Committee. If I retain our Afghan proposals it is possible that the opponents may assert that it is impossible to express any definite opinion or draw up any Draft Convention until they are acquainted with what we propose as to the relations between Russian and Afghan Authorities. If the Committee were placed in possession of the moderate and conciliatory character of our proposals, it would, I think, assist those who are sympathetic with an understanding and strengthen their hands. On the other hand I am perfectly aware that by divulging our Afghan proposals, I should be playing out all our cards before we were in possession of the Russian views in respect to Persia and of their opinions on our suggested solution of that question. Had the negotiations remained a matter between M. Isvolsky and myself, I would not have considered it desirable to communicate the proposals respecting Afghanistan until more progress had been made in the Persian question. But as an interdepartmental Committee is apparently to survey and discuss the whole scope of the negotiations, I think it would be advisable to give it all information, and not run the risk of it formulating proposals of its own with an incomplete knowledge of our views: while M. Isvolsky and Count Benckendorff, the two warmest adherents of an understanding, were left in the dark on one very important question.

The question is one, I know, of procedure, but it is of some importance, and I ventured therefore, in my telegram No. 13 of the 28th instant,⁽²⁾ to solicit your opinion before taking myself any step in the matter.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 526, No. 472, *encl.*]

⁽²⁾ [This telegram announced the formation of a small inter-departmental committee which was to examine the questions for Anglo-Russian negotiation. Sir A. Nicolson enquired whether he should lay before it the British proposals as to Afghanistan.]

MINUTE.

A still bigger gap in the completeness of the negotiations is the omission of the Near Eastern question. It is always open to the Committee to report that they cannot decide without taking Afghanistan or the Near East one or both into consideration, but it is for them to do this on their own initiative, not for us to suggest it to them.

E. G.

No. 468.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Foreign Office, February 6, 1907.

Tel. (No. 8.)

D. 7·30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 13 and desp[atch] No. 58.⁽¹⁾

We consider that you should not communicate our proposals regarding Afghanistan at present, as it is desirable that we should first know more of Russian views on our proposals relating to Persia.

Ameer has not so far touched on any political questions during his visit, but no communication should in any case be made to Russian Gov[ernmen]t with regard to Afghanistan until after H[is] M[ajesty] has left India.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document and note ⁽²⁾.]

No. 469.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, February 17, 1907.*

F.O. 371/320.

D. 7·49 P.M.

Tel. (No. 24.)

R. 10·30 P.M.

Committee, which is examining the questions forming the subject of our negotiations, has held sitting, and Count Benckendorff informs me that results were satisfactory, and that considerable progress has been made; in fact, he seemed to think that time was approaching when the whole Convention would be concluded. He said that Committee was desirous of knowing our views as to the Afghan Convention, as it is so closely connected with arrangement as to Persia. I said that I was not yet ready to communicate our views on the subject.

I shall see Minister for Foreign Affairs on Wednesday, and endeavour to ascertain from him what the Russian proposals as to Persia are, and will tell him that until we are in possession of these proposals we cannot well open up Afghan question.

In regard to latter, may I tell Minister for Foreign Affairs, when the time comes, that we would recommend Ameer to permit intercourse between Russia and specific selected Afghan frontier officials on local and non-political matters, and not merely that we would raise no objections to such relations? He would, I think, ask whether we should take former course.

I understand that Japanese negotiations are progressing well, and there is evident desire to hasten on ours.⁽¹⁾ Moment is favourable, and it would be advisable not to let it pass by.

⁽¹⁾ [For further reference to the Russo-Japanese negotiations, v. *supra*, pp. 284-6, *Ed. notes.*]

MINUTES.

Considering that we know that communications between Russian and Afghan officials are going on all the time I do not see how the Ameer could reasonably object to their being regularised. To ask the Russian Government to formulate their proposals for the interchange of direct communications between Russian and Afghan officials on non-political questions of a local character will be entirely in accordance with the previous policy of this Office as defined in Lord Lansdowne's despatch No. 305 of Nov. 5, 1903.⁽²⁾

C. H.

Consult I. O. as proposed.

E. G.

(²) [For a summary of this despatch, *v. supra*, pp. 519-20, No. 466.]

No. 470.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 19, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

D. 12.58 P.M.

Tel. (No. 26.)

R. 3.30 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

I do not anticipate that there would be difficulty in obtaining consent of Russian Government to our proposals as to Afghanistan with perhaps the exception of suppression of bounties to trade, but I think that they will press for some declaration that we will not go further than our existing treaties with the Amir. I fear that you may feel difficulty in meeting their wishes and the conclusion of an arrangement as to Persia would be consequently hampered. Their point of view is that when we have a free hand in Seistan we would before long extend our railway into that district, and if hereafter the Amir with our assistance constructed railway communication with India *status quo* would be altered seemingly to the disadvantage of Russia.

At the same time I think I would communicate our Afghanistan proposals as they are to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] when the Amir has left India and when their *pro-memoriâ* as to Persia has been communicated in writing, as then perhaps they would precisely state what their views and wishes are.

Questions are too important to be hustled through but at the same time it would now I venture to submit be advisable to allow as little delay as possible to occur in the continuous course of the negotiations.

MINUTE.

Suggest to the India Office that we should tell Sir A. Nicolson that prospects appear to be acceptable in principle that we must reserve final opinion till we see them in writing, but that we expect after receiving them to be able to put forward something about Afghanistan and that he may inform M. Isvolsky to this effect.

E. G.

(¹) [Tel. No. 25 of February 19, 1907. Its substance is given more fully in Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 98 of February 19, *supra*, pp. 428-31, No. 388.]

No. 471.

Foreign Office to India Office.

F.O. 371/320.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 19, 1907.

With ref[erence] to my letter 3227 of the 30th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I am directed by Sec[retar]y Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith to be laid before the S[ecretary] of S[tate] for India, copy of a tel[egram]m from H[is] M[ajesty's] Amb[assador] at St. Petersburg relative to the Anglo-Russian negotiations.⁽²⁾

It will be observed that Sir A. Nicolson, in anticipation of a question which may probably be addressed to him by M. Isvolsky, enquires whether he is authorised to inform His Excellency, at the proper moment, that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would recommend the Amir to permit intercourse between Russian and specifically selected Afghan frontier officials on local and non-political matters, and not merely that they would raise no objections to such relations.

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that although at a later stage in the negotiations it may become necessary to make certain recommendations to the Amir it is premature to raise the question at the present moment. He considers it desirable that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t should first learn (1) what are the Russian proposals in regard to Persia and whether they are likely to prove acceptable, and (2) what are exactly the Russian proposals in regard to direct Russo-Afghan relations, before any communication is made to the Amir on the subject.

Sir E. Grey would be glad to be favoured with the observations of the S[ecretary] of S[tate] for India in the matter, and he proposes, if Mr. Morley concurs, to reply to Sir A. Nicolson in the above sense.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[ORST].

(1) [This letter transmitted Tel. No. 13 from Sir A. Nicolson of January 28, 1907 (*v. supra*, p. 522, No. 467, note (2)), to the India Office, and stated that Sir E. Grey considered it inadvisable to lay the British proposals on Afghanistan before the Russian Committee, and that he wished to hear the Russian proposals regarding Persia before communicating the British proposals on Afghanistan.]

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 523, No. 469.]

No. 472.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 104.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. February 23, 1907.**R. March 4, 1907.*

During my interview with M. Isvolsky this afternoon, I said that I wished to speak with him in regard to Afghanistan, and that I should like to remind him that on several occasions the Russian Government had given assurances to His Majesty's Government that they considered the above country outside the sphere of Russian influence. His Majesty's Government were, at the same time, aware that certain inconveniences were caused by the absence of recognised means of communications between Russian and Afghan frontier officials on questions of local and non-political interest, and he would observe from the paper which I would hand him that His Majesty's Government were prepared to take the question into consideration. He would understand that it would be necessary to first obtain the consent of the Ameer before any arrangements were concluded on the subject, and that it would be necessary for His Majesty's Government to be acquainted with the views of the Russian Government, and the mode in which they proposed that they should be realized, before the Ameer could be approached. I might add, I said, that the Ameer was always

sensitive on the question, and was, I believed, not very well disposed to entrusting much latitude to his officials.

I gave M. Isvolsky the paper, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy, and he read it through carefully. He asked what was exactly meant by the term "agents" in the third paragraph. I said agents of all categories, officials, officers, &c. He asked how our relations were conducted with the Ameer. I said that we had an agent, a native Indian official, at Cabul, and that on occasions direct correspondence passed between the Indian Government and the Ameer. He observed that he did not quite understand what was meant by "bounties in subsidies" in the 4th paragraph. I said that allusion was made to bounties in the shape of subsidies, which I believed were accorded to Russian trade, and he would see that paragraph 5 offered facilities to Russian commerce if such bounties were removed. He asked whether I could tell him what bounties were accorded. I said that I was unable to do so off-hand, but doubtless he could obtain all information in some Russian Department.

M. Isvolsky said that he must of course study the paper and asked if he was to regard it as a Draft project of a Convention. I replied that it was by no means intended to be so, it merely represented in outline the views of my Government, and I should be happy to receive full details of the views of the Russian Government in respect to Afghanistan.

His Excellency said that he would supply me with them later, and doubtless after a comparison and explanation of the respective views, material would be found for a Draft project of Convention.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 472.

Paper communicated by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

1. His Majesty's Government would require the Russian Government to acknowledge Afghanistan as being outside the Russian sphere of influence, and under British guidance in all matters of external policy,

2. They would raise no objections to the establishment of direct communications between Russian officials and officials designated by the Ameer of Afghanistan as to matters of purely local character and of nonpolitical complexion,

3. They would require the Russian Government to abstain from sending agents into Afghanistan,

4. to discontinue giving bounties in subsidies to Russian trade in that country.

5. His Majesty's Government would raise no obstruction in the way of the same facilities being accorded to Russian trade with Afghanistan as British and British-Indian traders now enjoy in the territory of the Ameer.

MINUTE.

The text of the inclosure is the same as that of Sir A. Nicolson's instructions.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 473.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 147.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 20, 1907.

R. April 2, 1907.

I mentioned to M. Isvolsky to-day my hope that he would shortly be able to give me a reply to the amendments which His Majesty's Government desired to see

introduced into the Russian Draft Convention as to Persia,⁽¹⁾ and also that I should be favoured with the proposals of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan.

His Excellency said that he trusted to be in a position before long to give an answer in regard to the first question, but in respect to Afghanistan the matter was not in his hands, but was being studied by others. I remarked that I trusted that the proposals, when formulated, would be of such a nature as would be acceptable to His Majesty's Government.

M. Isvolsky said that he understood that there would be a proposal to establish Commercial Agents in Afghanistan, that some security should be afforded against the Ameer's troops being organized by Anglo-Indian officers, and against strategical railways being constructed with assistance from India. There were also questions in regard to treatment of frontier affairs, and other matters generally, which would reassure the Russian Government that Afghanistan would not be transformed from a "buffer state" into an *avant-garde* of the Indian Empire.

I observed that, in respect to Commercial Agents, we ourselves had none in Afghanistan, and that we had already made proposals as to intercourse between frontier officials. I did not wish to enter at present into other points, though I should remark that we expected Russia to recognize, as she had already done, that Afghanistan was outside of the sphere of her influence. M. Isvolsky said that, of course, it would be premature to discuss proposals which were not before us, but he thought that we had a resident at Cabul. I said that we had no Resident, but simply an agent, an Indian native official, and I would only repeat the hope that the Russian proposals when I received them, would be of a reasonable character, and that it would be remembered that Great Britain had the external affairs of Afghanistan under her guidance.

M. Isvolsky then mentioned that he had received from Count Benckendorff a "formula," which you had communicated to him in regard to some understanding as to the districts neighbouring to the countries in regard to which we were treating.⁽²⁾ His Excellency said that he had read the communication from Count Benckendorff hurriedly, and could not remember the exact terms. He sent for the paper but it could not be found at the moment, and he said he would let me have a copy of it later.

I expressed the hope that now that our negotiations were attracting the attention of the press, and that incomplete information in regard to them was oozing out, it would be possible for us to push on with our discussions, as the sooner they were concluded the better. His Excellency said that he would do his best, but that he feared that question of Afghanistan might create some little difficulty. I told him that I did not see why this should be so, but I did not pursue our conversation, as being his reception day there were many waiting to see him.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

After the concessions made relating to the Dardanelles⁽³⁾ and Mongolia we must be stiff about Afghanistan.

C. H.
E. G.

(1) [*cp. supra*, pp. 437-40, No. 395, and *encl.*]

(2) [The text of this formula is given, *supra*, p. 285, No. 262 (a), *encl.*]

(3) [*cp. supra*, pp. 279-82, Nos. 257-9.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 175.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. April 2, 1907.

R. April 15, 1907.

Sir,

M. Poklewski called upon me the day before yesterday and informed me that the General Staff had communicated to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs their views as to Afghanistan, and that M. Isvolsky had handed the dossier to him to report upon it. M. Poklewski enquired why I had telegraphed to London that I feared that the Russian proposals in regard to Afghanistan would be unacceptable.⁽¹⁾ I told him that, from some observations which M. Isvolsky had made to me in regard to Russia desiring to have commercial agents in that country, and also in respect to one or two other points, I did have misgivings, but that I should be glad if they were to prove unfounded. M. Poklewski gave me to understand that probably the question of commercial agents would be dropped. He then asked me if I thought that my Government would give any undertaking not to assist the Ameer in reorganising his forces, or in building forts and railways. I told him that perhaps a well organized Afghan army might have equal, if not greater, danger to India than to Russia, possibly not under the present Ameer but under his successors. Moreover, so far as I was aware, the Ameer himself had shown no desire to enlist the services of British officers, and if he had such a desire I should think that it was extremely improbable that it would be a very popular measure in Afghanistan. As to railway construction, personally I was doubtful if my Government would be disposed to tie their hands for the future. Furthermore if the Ameer was seized with a wish for railway development, it would be impossible to prohibit him from giving effect to it.

M. Poklewski then asked how far I thought that my Government would be prepared to go in reassuring the Russian Government. I told him that I really could not tell, as I did not know what the Russian Government desired. I thought that I could go so far as to state that we had no desire to annex or appropriate any Afghan territory, and he would doubtless recollect that in February 1905 the British Government of that day had so stated.⁽²⁾

M. Pokiewski asked what view I thought would be taken if the Russian Government stated that they had no aggressive views in regard to the Indian frontier, or words to that effect, and requested that the British Government would give an assurance that their influence in Afghanistan would be employed solely in a pacific manner and with no aggressive intention against Russia.

In my own mind I admit that it seemed to me that if the Russian Government would be satisfied with such an interchange of intentions it would be extremely satisfactory, but I merely said to M. Poklewski that, doubtless, any suggestions from the Russian Government would be well considered by my Government. He then asked whether we held to the abolition of bounties. I said that it was a point on which we should be glad to see Russia meet our wishes. He said that he was studying that question, and was ascertaining what bounties were given: he believed they were accorded merely on petroleum and sugar. I said that I had every hope that an arrangement could be arrived at on that point. He then asked what facilities were accorded to British Indian traders in Afghanistan. I said that I really did not know, and that I had telegraphed recently to enquire.

I told M. Poklewski that I sincerely trusted that I should receive before long the proposals of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan. I was desirous of hastening our negotiations now that we had agreed on the main points with respect to Persia and Thibet, and moreover public attention was being directed to the negotiations and the Press was publishing fragmentary accounts of them. M. Poklewski assured

⁽¹⁾ [Tel. No. 147 from Sir A. Nicolson of March 20, 1907. Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 520-1, No. 466 (a).]

me that M. Isvolsky was animated with the same desire; and that he hoped in a few days that I should receive a communication.

I report my conversation with M. Poklewski simply for the purpose of record, and it may be possible that some of his suggestions may find expression in the communication which I hope shortly to receive from M. Isvolsky in respect to Afghanistan.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

These are only M. Poklewski's impressions apparently.

F. A. C.

After Sir A. Nicolson's telegram was received a hope was expressed in conversation to Count Benckendorff that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t would repress any adverse tendency of this kind. This no doubt is the source of M. Poklevsky's information.

We should I imagine be able to give the assurance suggested by M. Poklevsky on the second page. [i.e. paragraph 3.]

E. G.

No. 475.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, April 5, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 60.)

D. 11 A.M.

R. 2 P.M.

Russian proposal as to Afghanistan.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] told me yesterday that he would not be in a position to communicate proposals to me for ten days or so and that then he would give me a draft convention. I believe that he is discussing question of bounties with Minister of Commerce.

No. 476.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 233.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 29, 1907.

R. May 13, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch which I have received from Colonel Napier, Military Attaché to this Embassy, reporting a conversation which he had held with General Palitzin, Chief of the General Staff, in respect to the negotiations concerning Afghanistan. I trust that the observations made by Colonel Napier will meet with your approval. They appear to me to be well timed and judicious.

I may state that M. Poklewski informed me on the 27th instant that an inter-departmental Committee was to meet on that day in connection with the question of Afghanistan, and he trusted that in 3 or 4 days I should receive the proposals which the Russian Government would present to His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 476.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 16.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, April 27, 1907.

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that I had a long conversation to-day with General Palitsin, Chief of the General Staff to whom I was paying a farewell visit. He at once turned the conversation on to our negotiations regarding Afghanistan. Of course no allusion was made to my visit to the Emperor the day before yesterday, but I know that General Palitsin was at Tsarskoe Celo yesterday, at the parade of the Life-Guard Grenadier Regiment, held by His Majesty, and it is not improbable that he was aware that the Emperor had spoken to me on that subject.

General Palitsin expressed the same view that His Majesty had laid stress upon, as to the necessity of opening up trade relations with Afghanistan, that it would be advantageous both to our country and theirs, and that the present state of affairs could not continue. I asserted that the Amir himself objected to widening his trade relations, as I believed, both with the Russians and ourselves. The General argued that Russia was negotiating with England, not with Afghanistan, and that he supposed Afghan policy was dictated by us, and we could bring pressure to bear on the Amir if we chose. I said the only way to come to an agreement was to be quite frank with each other. Speaking entirely of my personal views, I believed that our wish was to retain Afghanistan as a buffer State independent in its internal affairs either of England or Russia. What did Russia want? The General declared that that was also Russia's wish. At the same time they could not disguise the fact that we were, in India a strong Mahomedan Power, and that our Mahomedan subjects were loyal and not nearly so fanatical as were the Mahomedans in Russian Central Asia, that they apprehended that it might be possible for us at some future time, when we were in disagreement with Russia, to raise the Mahomedans against them, and hurl the Afghans against their borders. Therefore they were anxious that we should not make use of Afghanistan for offensive purposes towards their Central Asian possessions. On the other hand, there had been a great deal of loose talk about Russia's aggressive intentions with regard to India. It was said that because Russia had been able to transport one million men to Manchuria by a single line of railway, therefore she could send and maintain at railroad two million men at the termini of her railways in Central Asia. This of course was nonsense, and in fact, the idea of an invasion of India was a mere phantasy that had never been seriously entertained by responsible Russians. I replied that the idea of our invading Central Asia was quite out of the question with our little army, and that we should never try to stir up Mahomedan fanaticism against Christians, however strong we might be in India. It would be too dangerous a policy to pursue for any European nation with a large number of Mahomedan subjects. General Palitsin agreed to this, but was flattering enough to make the most of our potential strength in India in view of assistance from our colonies &c. This I did not disclaim, nor did I discuss the feasibility or otherwise of a Russian invasion of India. I believe however that his apprehensions as regards our aggressive intentions in Afghanistan were genuine, and I did my best to remove them. Of course our Indian army, I said, will look with regret on an agreement with Russia, that will deprive them of their one chance of active service against an enemy worthy of their attention, but that was not a point to be considered. General Palitsin expressed the opinion that we should have to fight the Afghans before long, who were getting more and more powerful. I said it was quite true that we had helped them to get strong, and had given them arms, bearing in mind the possibility that we might some day find them turned against ourselves, but in our anxiety to preserve a strong buffer state we had chosen what we believed was a lesser evil. The General said perhaps we were right; if we had not armed Afghanistan, some one else would have done so. As it was, Afghanistan imported arms from other places besides India.

I asked if any came from Russia. He said no, but they come from the Persian Gulf, and arms are even imported through Afghanistan into Central Asia, which is very disagreeable for us.

This led up to the subject of frontier relations, and the settling of minor disputes direct with the Afghans, which he considered was necessary, not only for the sake of convenience, but also for the prestige of Russia. I said I believed that our Government had already previously expressed its willingness to concede this point but that was a very different matter to opening up the country to trade. If it was true that Russia wished to preserve the independence of Afghanistan, that was not a wise measure. General Palitsin failed to see how that could in any way menace the independence of the country. I then made use of the argument that Your Excellency mentioned to me the other day, namely that if European traders &c., had access to the interior, a Russian subject might be murdered, and the maintenance of Russian prestige might demand a punitive expedition. The General considered that this was far-fetched, that Russia had experience of the same sort of people as the inhabitants of Afghanistan in Central Asia. I replied that it was impossible to compare the Afghans with a State like Bokhara or with the Sarts and other Mahomedans in Russian territory. It was true that the tribes immediately bordering on the Afghan frontier were some of them less fanatical than others, but that the true Afghan was intensely fanatical. I had been in Afghanistan and also in Russian Central Asia, and could assure him that nothing was more probable than that a European trader in Afghanistan would get into trouble and be killed. To touch one of their women was quite sufficient to bring about this result. The General seemed much impressed by this argument. He went on to say that Afghanistan was of great importance to Russia. Whereas England had many avenues of approach against Russia in case of hostilities, by the Baltic, the Black Sea, &c., Russia had only one against England, namely through Afghanistan, therefore if we both entered into an agreement not to make use of Afghanistan for the sake of making hostile advances against each other, England was giving up only one of her possible lines of advance, whereas Russia was abandoning her only point of vantage. I replied that my private opinion was that any military measures that we might adopt in the direction of Afghanistan, had in view merely the defence of India, and that if Russia left us alone in this part of the world, Central Asia was the last place we wished to attack. In my humble opinion if they wished to carry through an agreement with us, it would be better to confine the matter to the question of direct communication with the Afghans on purely frontier matters of petty disputes, and to a mutual engagement that neither Power should make use of Afghanistan for the sake of making hostile advances against the other, and leave matters of trade alone.

General Palitsin then said that we had promised to grant them the same facilities of trade that we ourselves enjoyed. What were they? I replied that I did not think that we had any special facilities, except that caravans of merchandise passed through the Khyber Pass on certain days of the week, but that no European traders or Europeans of any kind were admitted into the country, except one or two private servants of the Amir. He asked me what were the conditions of trade on the Kandahar route. I said I did not know exactly, but no Europeans were admitted there at all, and anyone crossing the frontier was liable to be shot or taken prisoner.

General Palitsin then went on to talk about Persia, saying he believed we had come to an agreement on that subject and was beginning to enlarge upon their immense sacrifice in giving up Seistan, when I discovered that I was already half-an-hour late for my interview with General Polivanov, the Assistant of the Minister for War, and that my conversation with General Palitsin had lasted an hour.

On reaching the Ministry for War, I met Lieutenant-Colonel Sniesareff coming out of General Polivanov's room. The former is an officer of the General Staff, in what corresponds to the Intelligence Division, and is a specialist on Afghanistan.

General Polivanov at once broached the subject of Afghanistan and said that

it was at this moment much occupying the Government, which had every confidence in M. Izvolsky bringing it to a successful conclusion. I remarked that there was every reason for two great Mahomedan Powers such as Russia and England to live in amity together and that I did not see that we had any opposing interest in Central Asia. General Polivanov agreed and said that Central Asia was big enough for both of us, and that the great advantage of friendly relations between us was that we could each speak quite frankly to each other. I did not see any object in being involved in any further discussion on the subject and turned the conversation to other topics. General Polivanov has always been particularly friendly to me, but I do not know that his opinions on this matter would have much weight.

I think it is evident from General Palitsin's remarks that Russia is really anxious to guarantee herself from any hostile action on the part of Afghanistan, goaded on by ourselves, and from any insidious advances that we may make under cover of Afghanistan whether for purposes of offence or of defence. The Russian General Staff must be well posted in the problem of the defence of India, seeing that the Times Correspondent's book on Imperial Strategy is being translated by them into Russian. It will perhaps appear somewhat fantastic that Russia should really be apprehensive of the harm that we could do her in Central Asia, in the magnificent position that she now occupies there thanks to the Orenburg and Central Asian Railways, but it must be remembered that she is still smarting from the Japanese defeat that we were the indirect means of inflicting upon her, and the loss of prestige of an unsuccessful war coupled with the revolutionists at home has evidently greatly shaken her hold upon her Central Asian Mahomedan subjects, and it is of the greatest importance that we should take advantage of this frame of mind. It is with most sincere regret that the Military Department will abandon any means of improving their strategical position, and it is possible that they may have abandoned Seistan in the hopes of gaining more substantial advantages in breaking down the barrier of an unknown and hostile Afghanistan. The thin end of the wedge is undoubtedly the question of direct relations with the Afghans, which is only harmless so long as our relations with Russia remain cordial.

I ventured to speak to General Palitsin with freedom, feeling that even if my views were not approved of by Your Excellency, they could only be expressed by a military attaché as his personal ideas, and could in no way compromise his Government, while it might make some impression on the military advisers of the Russian Government, or at any rate throw some light on their views.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

MINUTE.

General Palitsin's remark that we should probably have to fight Afghanistan ourselves is in itself a reason for being careful not to promise too much in the way of abstaining from interfering with Afghan affairs.

I am convinced that the apprehension of the Russians that we might adopt an aggressive policy against them in Central Asia is a real one on their part. It came out in the Russian agreement in 1895.

E. G.

No. 477.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 249.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 6, 1907.

R. May 13, 1907.

I expressed to M. Izvolsky today the hope that I should be very shortly furnished with the proposals of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan,

as time was slipping by and I knew that my Government were desirous of moving on with the discussions. His Excellency replied that he could assure me that he was doing his best to push on matters, and he could safely say that he had now secured the assent of all the interested Ministries to the essential points, and, so far as he was in a position to judge, he thought that the proposals of the Russian Government would be in accord with the views of His Majesty's Government. He was at present in discussion with the Minister of Commerce in regard to certain trade matters, especially with respect to the question of bounties; and he trusted that these discussions would be shortly concluded. He wished to communicate to us a Draft Convention, and he hoped that then no serious delay would ensue in concluding the whole matter. He recognised that he could have hastened on matters if the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had dealt alone with the question, but to ensure that the agreement should be a durable one, he had considered it desirable to obtain the full concurrence of other Departments and this procedure had necessarily taken time. I must not, he said, think that the question was being hung up, as he had been in daily communication with the other interested parties, but he feared that he could not have the Draft Convention ready this week.

I had to content myself with these assurances, though I confess I am disappointed in not being able to send the Draft Convention by the Messenger of this week.

M. Isvolsky added that the Conventions in respect to Persia and Thibet were now practically concluded, with the exception of the two telegraph lines and the Geographical definition of Thibet.

I enquired of M. Isvolsky in what form he proposed to draw up our Convention or Conventions. Did he wish a general preamble covering all the three agreements, or did he wish to sign three separate agreements? Furthermore was each agreement to be drawn up in the form of a regular Convention with interchange of Full Powers, ratifications, &c.? It seemed to me that in regard to Persia and Thibet we had already agreed upon preambles in each case, which it was desirable to preserve; and it struck me that perhaps it would therefore be as well to have three separate agreements for each subject.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky appeared to agree with this view, though he stated that he had not seriously considered the question. He also thought that perhaps it would be sufficient if we merely stated that we were "duly authorized by our respective Governments, &c." without the Sovereigns naming us as Plenipotentiaries to conclude the Convention. I should be grateful if you would kindly inform me of your wishes in regard to the above questions of form, so that I may be later in a position to discuss the matter more fully with M. Isvolsky.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [For further reference to this subject, *v. supra*, p. 299, No. 281, and pp. 499-500, No. 452, and *encl.*]

No. 478.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 260.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 15, 1907.

R. May 21, 1907.

M. Isvolsky gave me this afternoon a Draft Convention concerning Afghanistan, of which I have the honour to transmit a copy herewith.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency read it over to me, and said that it was based on various communications which had from time to time passed between the two Governments, and he trusted that it represented

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 541-4, No. 483, column 1.]

fairly accurately the views of His Majesty's Government. He wished to draw my especial attention to Article IV. I would observe that the Russian Government engaged not to send agents into Afghanistan, and he had been obliged to add a clause which referred to the future, and which he had inserted to meet several objections which had been offered to a simple bare announcement that no agents would be despatched. I would see that the additional clause was quite harmless, as the two Governments engaged in certain future contingencies, which might never arise, merely to exchange views on the subject of Commercial Agents. This would not imply that His Majesty's Government need ever agree to such agents being sent, and in his own opinion he thought that the additional clause would in practice remain inoperative. He hoped that I would explain this confidentially to you, so as to remove any misunderstandings.

With respect to Article VI, M. Isvolsky repeated what he had on more than one occasion previously explained, that Russia did not give any bounties or subsidies, but that on certain manufactured articles she merely remitted the duty which had been paid on the raw material. This was not a procedure special to her trade with Afghanistan, but was one generally adopted with regard to the whole export trade of Russia. Her trade with Afghanistan was on the same footing and subjected to exactly the same treatment as her commerce with the rest of the world, and it would therefore be difficult to make an exception in regard to Afghanistan.

As regards trade matters I told M. Isvolsky that I should like to point out to him that Article VII was of a very positive character, and as it stood, would practically tie the hands of the Ameer. He would understand that we could not do this without consultation with the Ameer and without his consent, and the same remarks applied to Article V. His Excellency said that he understood this, but that it was of no practical advantage to Russia that we should merely state both in respect to Articles V and VII that we would place no obstruction in the way of, or had no objection to, frontier officials entering on certain relations with each other, or to Russian trade enjoying the same facilities as British Trade. Russia, he added, bound herself to have no direct relations with the Ameer, and therefore she could only look to us to arrange with the Ameer the matters to which reference had been made. A passive attitude on our part would be of no use to Russia, and in a Convention Russia could only recognise His Majesty's Government and leave it to them to arrange with the Ameer. I admitted that this was perfectly true, and I quite saw the force of his observations. I had in my mind chiefly the length of time, and it would be considerable, which would elapse if we were to delay the Convention while we discussed such matters with the Ameer, who was extremely susceptible on all questions affecting his commerce and internal affairs. M. Isvolsky asked if I could suggest any other phraseology, as he was under the impression we had already accepted the principle of intercommunication between frontier officials, and equality of Commercial treatment. I begged His Excellency not to misunderstand me, or imagine that I was wishing to withdraw from anything I had already communicated. I was sure that my Government recognised the principle which he had mentioned, and indeed it was so stated in the 5 points which I had originally communicated to him. I was thinking rather as to how to turn the difficulty to which I had alluded, and I had not a formula ready in my mind. At the same time it was not perhaps impossible to discover some phraseology which would meet the circumstances, but on this I must of course consult with my Government.

M. Isvolsky said that he had had a really hard fight to win over conflicting views to accepting the broad principles which underlay the Draft Convention, and Article II embodied the principle to which he believed His Majesty's Government attached great importance. I told His Excellency that I was sure this would be fully recognised at home, and I did not pursue further the conversation on the subject of Afghanistan beyond saying that I would transmit the text of the Draft Convention to you tomorrow.

I made no allusion to Article I, which characterises the political position of

Afghanistan, but the Russian Government evidently attach importance to the term "buffer state," as M. Isvolsky has frequently employed the term to me, and it was admitted by Lord Lansdowne in his despatch to Sir C. Hardinge of March 8, 1905,⁽²⁾ of which a copy was communicated to Count Benckendorff. Articles V and VII offer some difficulties; and it is clear that the Russian Government will expect that we should adopt in the treatment of the questions therein mentioned something more than an attitude of benevolent neutrality. Indeed it would, I submit, be advisable that some steps should be promised on our part in order to exclude the possibility of the Russian Government endeavouring, in case of our refusing to actively interest ourselves in the matter, to seek some other methods of attaining the ends which they desire.

I hardly venture to make any suggestions on questions outside of my province, but I respectfully submit that I might perhaps secure the assent of the Russian Government to prefacing each of the two articles by the words "His Majesty's Government recognise that," and further stating that His Majesty's Government will use their good offices to procure the fulfilment of the provisions, or words to that effect. The last alinéa in Article VII that a uniform customs tariff should be established along the whole of the Afghan frontier, is a new proposal, and one which I submit might be usefully excluded from the present convention. I think I could satisfy the Russian Government that too much must not be asked of the Ameer, and that they could well rest content with a recognition on our part of equality of treatment and that we would be ready to do what was possible to secure it. The whole of Article VII is somewhat comprehensive both for the present and for the future, but it should be borne in mind that the Russian Government have made a great departure from the attitude they had hitherto maintained in formally acknowledging that Russia must treat with the Ameer only through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government and in engaging not to despatch agents into Afghanistan.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 521, No. 466 (b).]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following minutes are attached to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 76 of May 15, 1907, of the substance of which the above despatch gives a fuller account:

MINUTES.

I do not exactly know what a "buffer" State implies but I would point out that Lord Lansdowne, in his despatch to St. Petersburg no: 88 of March 8, 1905,⁽¹⁾ says:—"Count Benckendorff attached importance to the expression 'a buffer State,' and I said that it seemed to me an appropriate description of the position which both Governments desired to assign to Afghanistan."

C. H.

We cannot go back on what Lord Lansdowne said about a "buffer state"; but there is no recognized definition of this phrase and it must be taken as defined by what follows.

The first sentence of article III is dangerous; it is more than we can promise. As to the Ameer's concurrence I think we might get over that point by making Article V dependent upon it and stating that we will raise no objection and will so inform the Ameer.

The commercial stipulations will have to be more vague. We might agree not to ask for special facilities for British trade in the sense of lower duties, but the rest might be renewed for a commercial treaty with the Amir.

Send the telegram to the Indian Office but reserve comments as proposed, till the despatch arrives.

E. G.]

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 521, No. 466 (b).]

No. 479.

Foreign Office to India Office.

F.O. 371/320.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 24, 1907.

I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to tr[ansmit] to you herewith a desp[atch] which has been received from H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador in St. Petersburg enclosing a draft Convention relating to Afghanistan and containing a record of his conversation with M. Isvolsky on the occasion of its communication by the latter.⁽¹⁾

The Convention, consisting of a preamble and seven Articles, has been carefully studied in this Dep[artmen]t and I am directed by Sir E. Grey to transmit to you for the consideration of Mr. Secretary Morley a counterdraft which, in his opinion, would meet the requirements of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t.⁽²⁾

I am desired to point out that in view of the ambiguity of the expression "buffer State" Sir E. Grey has considered it advisable to delete this Article, but in the event of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t wishing that some reference should be made to Afghanistan as an intervening State between British and Russian territory, he is of opinion that an allusion to the geographical situation of Afghanistan might be more suitably inserted in the preamble than in an Article of the Convention.

Sir E. Grey further considers it desirable that this Convention, together with those relating to Persia and Thibet, should be concluded without prolonged delay, and in view of the care which has been taken in Art[icle]s 4 and 5 of the counterdraft not to commit the Ameer definitely he trusts that if the proposed text meets with Mr. Morley's approval it may not be necessary to obtain the Ameer's adhesion before proceeding further with the negotiations with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, a course which would entail prolonged delay.

As matters now stand it is hoped that if the Agreement is concluded in the proposed form, the Ameer will recognize, when it is communicated to him that the position of Afghanistan is secured and strengthened from outside interference and that as regards internal administration every consideration for him has been shown by making any changes dependent upon his consent.

I am, &c.

F. A. CAMPBELL.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [This counter-draft is that given on p. 539, No. 481, encl. It was amended in accordance with the views of the India Office.]

No. 480.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 204.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 28, 1907.

Count Benckendorff came to see me to-day, and asked me about the Afghanistan proposals.

I said I had been favourably impressed by them, and emphasised this point. But we should have some alterations to propose, and I would let him have the draft of them as soon as possible.

Count Benckendorff said that the question of the occupation of Afghanistan, by which I understood him to mean the agreement on our part not to occupy, was one which had been mentioned by Lord Lansdowne, and recorded in the despatch to

Sir Charles Hardinge some time ago.⁽¹⁾ That was why he had introduced the phrase into the Russian draft.

I said I understood the position to be that, if Russia declared Afghanistan to be outside her interest, and agreed that all political communication were to pass through the British Government, she wanted to be sure that Afghanistan would not be used aggressively against her. This point was perfectly clear, and we were in complete agreement about it. The difficulty in connection with it was one of words. We wished to express this intention in such a way as not to tie our own hands in the case of trouble between ourselves and Afghanistan, which might arise some day in connection with our own frontier tribes.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 521, No. 466 (b).]

No. 481.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 202.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 29, 1907.

I have received Y[our] E[xcellency's] desp[atch] No. 260 of the 15th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾ forwarding a draft convention, handed to you by the Russian Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs], for the regulation of Anglo-Russian relations in Afghanistan, and reporting a conversation which you had with M. Izvolski on the subject.

The Russian draft has been carefully studied in this Dep[artmen]t and I tr[ansmit] to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith, for your conf[identia]l information and for any observations which you may wish to offer, a counter-draft based on the results of that examination which, in my opinion, would meet the requirements of the situation, and which has now been submitted to the Gov[ernmen]t of India.

The following observations will make clear to Y[our] E[xcellency] the considerations which have led me to put forward the modified proposals embodied in this counter-draft.

The preamble proposed by M. Izvolski is unobjectionable, and has been retained in its original form.

In view of the ambiguous nature of the expression "buffer state" used in Art[icle] I of the Russian draft to describe the *status* of Afghanistan, I have considered it advisable to delete this article altogether. I am however of opinion that, in the event of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t wishing that some reference should be made to Afghanistan as an intervening state between British and Russian territory, an allusion to the geographical situation of that country might more suitably be inserted in the preamble than in an article of the convention.

Art[icle] 2 of M. Izvolski's draft appears to be satisfactory and is therefore retained as Art[icle] 1 of the counter-draft.

In Art[icle] 3 of the Russian draft (Art[icle] 2 of the counter-draft) I desire the omission from the first sentence of the word "occupy," as, in the event of the cooperation of an unfriendly Amir with tribes within the limits of British territory or of the infraction of Treaty agreements with H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], it might unfortunately become necessary to undertake another expedition to Kabul. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would have no objection, however, to agreeing not to "annex" any portion of Afghan territory and that word is therefore retained. The words "or its dependencies," in the same

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 533-5, No. 478.]

sentence, are omitted. They are vague and there is no doubt as to the position of the frontiers of Afghanistan. At the end of the same sentence I should prefer to substitute for the word "affairs" the word "administration" which is more definite and less comprehensive. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would have no objection to the retention of the second sentence of this article but would prefer that it should contain a reference to the Agreement signed at Kabul by Sir Louis Dane, which has accordingly been inserted, and that the unilateral engagement which it embodies should be made bilateral by the addition of the further clause which now follows it.

In view of the considerations set forth in the earlier part of Y[our] E[xcellency's] desp[atch], H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will raise no objection to the mention in the second sentence of the Russian Art[icle] 4 (Art[icle] 3 of the counter-draft) of the possible admission, at some future time, of Russian commercial agents into Afghanistan. They would prefer, however, to substitute the words "will agree as to what measures shall be taken in this sense" for the words "will exchange views on the subject." The wording now suggested implies the necessity of an agreement which the Russian text does not.

In Art[icle] 5 of the Russian draft (Art[icle] 4 of the counterdraft) I desire to insert after the word "may" the words "with the consent of the Amir, which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will endeavour to obtain." This insertion makes it clear that the proposed arrangement is dependent on the consent of the Amir and expresses at the same time the readiness of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to serve as an intermediary to secure his adhesion, points which, as Y[our] E[xcellency's] desp[atch] shows, you also consider it desirable to emphasise.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would be unable to accept Art[icle] 6 of M. Izvolski's draft as it stands, since it would imply a recognition of the right of Russia to apply to her trade with Afghanistan the system which Great Britain describes as one of "bounties."

Further, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] could not undertake to compel the Amir to establish a uniform customs tariff on the frontiers of Afghanistan as contemplated in the last Russian article, since such action would constitute an interference with the internal administration of that country in violation of the present agreement.

I am of opinion that these two articles should be remodelled in the wider terms adopted in Art[icle] 5 of the counter-draft, which are to a great extent those of the draft instructions furnished to Y[our] E[xcellency] and communicated by you to M. Izvolski on Feb[ruary] 23 last as reported in your desp[atch] No. 104 of that date.⁽²⁾

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] consider that this agreement, together with those relating to Persia and Thibet, should now be concluded without prolonged delay, and they are of opinion that, in view of the care which has been taken throughout to consider the susceptibilities of the Amir and, by the wording of Art[icles] 4 and 5 of the counter-draft, to avoid committing him definitely, there is no necessity to obtain his acceptance of the provisions of this instrument before proceeding to its signature, a formality the accomplishment of which would entail a very considerable delay.

As matters now stand, it is hoped that, if the agreement is concluded in the proposed form, the Amir will recognise, when it is communicated to him, that the position of Afghanistan is secured and strengthened from outside interference and that, as regards internal administration, every consideration for him has been shown by making any changes dependent on his consent.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 525-6, No. 472.]

Enclosure in No. 481.

*Draft Convention between Great Britain and Russia relating to Afghanistan
(Counterdraft).*

The High Contracting Parties, in order to assure the perfect security of their respective frontiers in Central Asia and to maintain there a solid and lasting peace, have agreed as follows:—

ARTICLE I.

The Russian Government recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence and engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE II.

The British Government, having recorded in the Treaty signed at Kabul on March 21, 1905,⁽³⁾ that they recognize the sovereignty of the Amir and that they have no desire to interfere in the internal government of his territories, Great Britain engages not to annex any portion of Afghanistan or to interfere in the internal administration of the country provided that the Ameer fulfils the engagements already contracted towards H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] under the above-mentioned Treaty. Great Britain further undertakes to exercise her influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense towards Russia and will not herself take in Afghanistan or encourage Afghanistan to take any measures which may be considered as threatening the Russian frontier. On the other hand, the Russian Government undertake not to annex any part of Afghanistan, nor to take any measures either involving interference with the internal government of the territories of the Amir or such as may be considered as threatening the Afghan frontier and calculated to provoke retaliatory measures. It is understood that the British and Russian Governments maintain the right to carry out such railway projects as may seem desirable to them within their own frontiers.

ARTICLE III.

Russia engages not to send any agents into Afghanistan. If in the future the development of commerce clearly shows the utility of commercial agents, the two Governments will agree as to what measures should be taken in this sense.

ARTICLE IV.

The Russian and Afghan authorities specially designated for the purpose may, with the consent of the Amir which His Majesty's Government will endeavour to obtain, establish direct relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

ARTICLE V.

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia affirm their adherence to the principles of the "open door" and of equality of commercial opportunity and with a view to the same facilities being accorded to Russian trade and traders in Afghanistan as British and British Indian traders now, or may in the future, enjoy in the territory of the Amir, H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] will undertake to exercise their influence to secure the reciprocal observance of these principles in Afghanistan.

(3) [Printed in *J. & P.* (1905), LVII, (*Cd.* 2534), p. 459.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 233.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 12, 1907.

With reference to my telegram No. 78 of yesterday,⁽¹⁾ relative to the proposed agreement between Great Britain and Russia respecting Afghanistan, I transmit to Your Excellency herewith a draft Convention⁽²⁾ in which have been inserted the further modifications now agreed upon in consultation with the India Office.⁽³⁾

I have to request Your Excellency to communicate this paper to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to express the hope that the amended draft may prove acceptable to his Government.

In making this communication to Monsieur Izvolski Your Excellency should add, with reference to Article 3 of the draft (previously Article 4), that His Majesty's Government hope to learn as soon as this draft agreement has been accepted the points on the frontier to which it is proposed to appoint the Russian officials to be designated for the purpose of settling local and non-political questions with Afghan officials.

It is necessary that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] should have this information as soon as possible so as to enable them to make the necessary comm[unicatio]n to the Ameer without delay.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

(1) [Tel. No. 78 to Sir A. Nicolson of June 10, 1907, gave "further amendments for insertion in the British counter-draft" after consultation with the India Office. *v. infra, Ed. note.*]

(2) [*v. infra*, pp. 541-4, No. 483, column 2.]

(3) [*v. infra, Ed. note.*]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following minute by Sir C. Hardinge shows the methods by which the final British counter-draft was evolved.

F.O. 371/320.

Foreign Office, June 7, 1907.

The accompanying amended counterdraft containing the alterations proposed by the Political Committee of the India Office was given to me yesterday by Mr. Ritchie who informed me that the plan proposed is that Sir E. Grey, after considering the proposed changes, should decide with Mr. Morley as to their acceptance or further modification.

Art. II. The amendments in the first sentence are, in my opinion, an improvement on the former text.

The omission of the words "which may be considered as" is also of advantage since it removes all ambiguity as to the nature of the measures to be avoided.

I recommend the omission of the last words of the amended article "or threatening the Afghan frontier." I have had one interview with Count Benckendorff and two interviews with M. Poklewsky, who both declared that such a limitation of the action of Russia within her own frontiers was quite inadmissible and would never be accepted by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t. They argued that no restriction is placed on the action of the Gov[ernmen]t of India within the Indian frontier, nor on the action of the Ameer within the Afghan frontiers, all that they ask being that our influence in Afghanistan should be of a pacific character, that we should take no military measures in Afghanistan and that we should not encourage the Afghans to threaten the Russian frontier. I put a concrete case to them of the eventuality of the Afghans building a fort close to the Russian frontier and asked whether this would entail an obligation on our part to prevent it. The reply was in the negative provided that we did not encourage or help the Afghans to build the fort. To sum up, according to the Russian view, England, Russia and Afghanistan are to be free to take such action as they may choose within their respective frontiers, but that England is to engage to pursue a pacific policy in Afghanistan and neither to take in Afghanistan nor encourage the Ameer to take any measures threatening the Russian frontier. It seems to me that the liberty of action of Afghanistan within her own frontiers and the withdrawal of any responsibility on our part for such action as the Ameer may take are well worth the omission of the last few words of the article which would be very difficult of interpretation. Thus, would the construction of a Russian railway to Termez, or the reinforcement of the garrison at Tashkend be regarded as a menace to the Afghan frontier? Or what is the

limit of that which constitutes a threat and that which does not? The retention of these words would, I am convinced, provide endless causes of friction and misunderstanding with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in the future.

Article III. The clause about commercial Agents is inserted at the end of Art[icle] V which deals with commercial matters. This clause, according to M. Isvolsky, is inserted to save the face of the Russians.

Article IV. "When the consent of the Ameer shall have been obtained"

I wish to point out that this phraseology entails no obligation upon us to endeavour to obtain the Ameer's consent and in his desp[atch] No. 260,⁽¹⁾ herewith annexed, Sir A. Nicolson points out that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t will expect from us in the treatment of this question "something more than an attitude of benevolent neutrality." Sir A. Nicolson adds: "Indeed it would, I submit, be advisable that some steps should be promised on our part in order to exclude the possibility of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t endeavouring, in case of our refusing to actively interest ourselves in the matter, to seek some other methods of attaining the ends which they desire." This argument is very convincing and I venture to think that our wording "with the consent of the Ameer, which H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t will endeavour to obtain" is the best and the most likely formula to be accepted by the Russians. It is true that it involves action on our part with the Ameer, but as L[or]d Lansdowne admitted in principle that direct relations on the frontier should be allowed under certain conditions it was inevitable that any real arrangements would have to be communicated by us to the Ameer, and we can hardly with reason claim to have sole control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan if we fail to put before the Ameer, and to endeavour to obtain his consent to, arrangements which have been agreed upon between the British and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts.

See also M. Isvolsky's statement that "a passive attitude would be of no use to Russia" and that "Russia could only look to us to arrange with the Ameer matters to which reference had been made."

Article V. "agree that any facilities shall be equally enjoyed"

It is of no use the British and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts agreeing as to what "shall" be done in Afghanistan if nothing is done to see that their wishes are realised. The Russians are precluded from doing anything so it is obvious that we shall be expected to see that the agreement does not remain a dead letter. I therefore think that we should add after the words "Russian traders" the following sentence: "H[is] M[ajesty's] Government further undertake to exercise their influence to secure the reciprocal observance of these principles in Afghanistan." Otherwise the article would be valueless to the Russians and would look like an evasion of our responsibilities.

The rest of Art[icle] V seems all right. . . .

C. H.]

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 533-5, No. 478.]

No. 483.

Anglo-Russian Convention respecting Afghanistan.

F.O. 371/320.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following table shows the Russian and British drafts of May 15 and June 17 respectively and the text as finally determined. The use of italics indicates identity with the final text. The British draft sent to Sir A. Nicolson on May 29 (*v. supra*, pp. 537-9, No. 481 and *encl.*) was not communicated to M. Isvolski and is therefore not entered on this table.]

RUSSIAN DRAFT.	BRITISH COUNTER-DRAFT.	FINAL TEXT. ⁽¹⁾
(Handed to Sir A. Nicolson by M. Isvolski, May 15, 1907.)	(Handed to M. Isvolski by Sir A. Nicolson, June 17, 1907.)	(Signed, August 31, 1907.)
<i>Les Hautes Puissances contractantes, dans le but d'assurer en Asie Centrale la sécurité parfaite de leurs frontières respectives et d'y</i>	<i>The High Contracting Parties, in order to assure the perfect security of their respective frontiers in Central Asia, and to maintain there</i>	<i>Les Hautes Parties Contractantes, en vue d'assurer la parfaite sécurité sur les frontières respectives en Asie Centrale et le main-</i>

(¹) [This "Convention concernant l'Afghanistan" constitutes the second part of the Anglo-Russian Convention concluded on August 31, 1907. The text is printed from the British original text in the Foreign Office. It was sent home by Sir A. Nicolson in his despatch No. 445 of August 31, 1907, *v. supra*, p. 502, No. 456. The preamble to the treaty is also printed on that page. The whole treaty is reprinted for convenience of readers, *infra*, pp. 618-20, Appendix I.]

RUSSIAN DRAFT.

maintenir *une paix solide et durable*, sont convenues de ce qui suit :—

ARTICLE I.

L'Afghanistan constituera un Etat - tampon (buffer state) entre les possessions respectives des deux Puissances contractantes.

ARTICLE II.

Le Gouvernement Impérial reconnaît que l'Afghanistan se trouve en dehors de la sphère d'influence russe et s'engage à user pour toutes ses relations politiques avec l'Afghanistan de l'intermédiaire du Gouvernement Royal. [See also Article IV.]

ARTICLE III.

La Grande Bretagne s'engage à n'annexer, ni occuper aucune partie de l'Afghanistan ou de ses dépendances et à ne pas intervenir dans les affaires intérieures du pays.

BRITISH COUNTER-DRAFT.

a solid and lasting peace, have agreed as follows :—

ARTICLE I.

The Russian Government recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence, and engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government; they further undertake not to send any Agents into Afghanistan.

ARTICLE II.

The British Government having recorded in the Treaty signed at Kabul on the 21st March, 1905, that they recognize the agreement and the engagements concluded with the late Ameer Abdur Rahman, and that they have no desire to interfere in the internal government of his territories, Great Britain engages not to annex or to occupy in contravention of that Treaty any portion of Afghanistan or to interfere in the internal administration of the country, provided that the Ameer fulfils the

FINAL TEXT.

tien dans ces régions d'une paix solide et durable, ont conclu la convention suivante :

ARTICLE I.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique déclare qu'il n'a pas l'intention de changer l'état politique de l'Afghanistan.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique s'engage en outre à exercer son influence en Afghanistan seulement dans un sens pacifique et il ne prendra pas lui-même en Afghanistan et n'encouragera pas l'Afghanistan à prendre des mesures menaçant la Russie.

De son côté, le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie déclare qu'il reconnaît l'Afghanistan comme se trouvant en dehors de la sphère de l'influence russe, et il s'engage à se servir pour toutes ses relations politiques avec l'Afghanistan de l'intermédiaire du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ; il s'engage aussi à n'envoyer aucuns Agents en Afghanistan.

ARTICLE II.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ayant déclaré dans le traité signé à Kaboul le 21 Mars 1905 qu'il reconnaît l'arrangement et les engagements conclus avec le défunt Emir Abdur Rahman et qu'il n'a aucune intention de s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure du territoire Afghan, la Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas annexer ou occuper, contrairement au dit traité, une partie quelconque de l'Afghanistan, ni à s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure de ce pays, sous

RUSSIAN DRAFT.

BRITISH COUNTER-DRAFT.

FINAL TEXT.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique n'exercera son influence en Afghanistan que dans un intérêt pacifique et ne prendra lui-même, ni n'encouragera l'Afghanistan à prendre des mesures militaires qui pourraient être considérées comme une menace pour la frontière russe.

engagements already contracted towards His Majesty's Government under the above-mentioned Treaty. Great Britain further undertakes to exercise her influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense towards Russia, and will not herself take in Afghanistan, or encourage Afghanistan to take, any measures threatening the Russian frontier. On the other hand, the Russian Government undertake not to annex or to occupy any part of Afghanistan, nor to take any measures involving interference with the internal government of the territories of the Ameer.

réserve que l'Emir remplira les engagements déjà contractés par lui à l'égard du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique en vertu du traité susmentionné.

ARTICLE IV.

La Russie s'engage à ne pas envoyer d'agents en Afghanistan. Si, toutefois, dans l'avenir, le développement du commerce russe avec l'Afghanistan démontrait l'utilité évidente d'agents commerciaux dans ce pays, le Gouvernement Impérial entrerait à cet effet dans un échange de vues avec le Gouvernement Royal.

[See Article IV on p. 544.]

[See Article IV on p. 544.]

ARTICLE V.

Les autorités des provinces frontières, russes et afghanes, spécialement désignées à cet effet, pourront établir entre elles des relations directes pour le règlement des questions locales n'ayant pas de caractère politique.

ARTICLE III.

The Russian and Afghan authorities on the frontier specially designated for the purpose may, when the consent of the Ameer shall have been obtained by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] and communicated to the Russian Gov[ernment] by them, establish direct relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

ARTICLE III.

Les autorités Russes et Afghanes, spécialement désignées à cet effet, sur la frontière ou dans les provinces frontières, pourront établir des relations directes réciproques pour régler les questions locales d'un caractère non politique.

ARTICLE VI.

Le Gouvernement Impérial déclare qu'il n'applique pas actuellement et s'engage à ne pas appliquer à l'avenir au commerce russe avec l'Afghanistan de mesures de faveur spéciales autres que celles qui sont ou qui pourraient être prises d'une manière générale par rapport à toute exportation russe dans quelque pays que cela soit.

ARTICLE VII.

Le commerce, les négociants et les sujets russes seront placés dans l'Afghanistan, tant au point de vue des droits de douane, que des taxes intérieures et sous tous les autres rapports, sur le même pied et profiteront des mêmes facilités dont le commerce, les négociants et les sujets anglais et anglo-indiens jouissent actuellement dans ce pays ou qui pourraient leur être accordées dans l'avenir. Il est entendu qu'un régime douanier uniforme sera établi sur toute la frontière afghane.

ARTICLE IV.

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia affirm their adherence to the principle of equality of commercial opportunity, and agree that any facilities which may have been, or shall be hereafter obtained for British and British-Indian traders, shall be equally enjoyed by Russian traders. Should the progress of commerce establish the necessity for commercial agents, the two Gov[ernmen]ts will agree as to what measures shall be taken, due regard being had to the Ameer's sovereign powers.

ARTICLE IV.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie déclarent reconnaître, par rapport à l'Afghanistan, le principe de l'égalité de traitement pour ce qui concerne le commerce et conviennent que toutes les facilités qui ont été ou seront acquises à l'avenir au commerce et aux commerçants anglais et anglo-indiens seront également appliquées au commerce et aux commerçants russes. Si le développement du commerce vient à démontrer la nécessité d'agents commerciaux, les deux Gouvernements s'entendront sur les mesures à prendre, eu égard bien entendu aux droits souverains de l'Emir.

ARTICLE V.

Les présents arrangements n'entreront en vigueur qu'à partir du moment où le Gouvernement Britannique aura notifié au Gouvernement de Russie le consentement de l'Emir aux termes ci-dessus stipulés.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 326.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 17, 1907.

R. June 24, 1907.

I handed to M. Isvolsky to-day a copy of the counter-draft of a Draft Convention between Great Britain and Russia relating to Afghanistan which was forwarded to me in your despatch No. 233 of the 12th instant,⁽¹⁾ and I have the honour to transmit a copy of a private letter which I addressed to His Excellency giving certain explanations.

I told M. Isvolsky that I trusted and believed that he would find that, although the form of the Convention had been recast, the desiderata of the Russian Government had been met, and I wished to impress on him the earnest desire of my Government that no time should now be lost in terminating all our Conventions.

I pointed out to His Excellency that we had deleted his article I. The expression "Buffer state," though perhaps a useful term to employ in conversation, was hardly one to be used in a solemn Convention, and that moreover it was ambiguous and subject to different interpretations. As to Article II, I wished to explain to him that we had several points of importance to consider. In the first place there were the susceptibilities of the Ameer, which we had to take seriously into account; and there was also the observance by him of his engagements towards us, a matter of great importance to the peace and security on our frontier. A loosely worded article binding Great Britain not to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan might, I would tell him frankly, lead to the interpretation that under no circumstances were we to take any step to ensure the observance of Treaty stipulations. He would understand that we must exercise care on this point, and we had therefore recited the fact of our Treaty engagements, and had also inserted a proviso. We were practically following the course taken in the case of the Thibetan Convention. I would further observe that the engagement not to occupy or annex any portions of Afghanistan must be a bilateral one. This doubtless required no explanations, as it was self-evident. With regard to Article III it was clear that we could not bind the Ameer without his consent, and we were therefore obliged to insert a reservation in that sense. If the Article were accepted as it stood we should be ready to sign the Convention without awaiting the consent of the Ameer which would entail considerable delay: but that it would be desirable that we should be informed as to the exact points on the frontier where the Russian Government proposed to place their officers.

With respect to commercial matters, I would tell him frankly that the system of the levy of duties seemed to be a little haphazard, and our information as regards the duties was not so precise as could be wished. I gave him, for his private guidance, certain information which I had received which would show him that the duties on British Indian trade varied greatly, and indeed in some instances rose as high as 60%. We had never discussed these matters seriously with the Ameer, and we always regarded them as affecting his internal administration in which we had no desire to interfere. In the circumstances it was only possible to draw up an Article dealing with commercial facilities in general terms, and he would see that our proposed Article IV affirmed the principle to which both Governments attached importance, and afforded, I thought, all reasonable satisfaction to the wishes of the Russian Government.

M. Isvolsky said that he must carefully study the project; and on my pressing him to allow no delay to elapse, he stated that I could rely on him to do his best, but that he would have to consult with the others, presumably meaning the General Staff and the Ministers of Commerce and Finance. I observed that this need take no time, as we had made no substantial changes in our counter draft, and that our

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 540, No. 482.]

proposals chiefly related to rearrangement and drafting. M. Isvolsky said that he did not deny that we had preserved the "grandes lignes," but that the whole "économie" of the project had been altered, and he feared that some time must elapse before he could come to an agreement with the others who were interested. In short His Excellency was distinctly not encouraging as to the period which would elapse before I received a reply. It is possible that when he has examined the matter more closely he may see that it is not so complicated as a first hasty perusal might have led him to imagine. I think that Article II gave him cause for reflection.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 484.

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

Mon cher Ministre,

Saint-Pétersbourg, 4/17 Juin, 1907.

En vous communiquant le texte d'un Contre Projet d'une Convention au sujet de l'Afghanistan, je me permets de l'accompagner à titre privé et confidentiel, de quelques explications.

Nous acceptons le préambule tel qu'il a été rédigé dans votre projet : mais nous proposons d'exclure votre Article I car l'expression "Etat tampon" (buffer state) comporte quelque ambiguïté qu'il serait mieux d'écarter. Nous acceptons votre Article II en y ajoutant la première phrase de votre Article IV. Vous trouverez la seconde phrase de votre Article IV avec une petite modification, intercalée dans notre Article IV où elle serait plus à propos.

En ce qui concerne votre Article III (notre Article II) nous proposons quelques amplifications ainsi que quelques modifications de rédaction, dans le but d'en rendre le sens plus clair et précis. Comme les frontières d'Afghanistan sont bien connues il serait mieux d'exclure le mot vague "dépendances" ; et nous désirons faire mention, comme il a été fait dans notre Convention concernant le Tibet, des Traités ou Conventions que nous avons conclus avec l'Amir. Au lieu "d'affaires intérieures" nous préférons l'expression plus précise de "l'administration intérieure." Nous sommes aussi d'avis, et à ceci, je n'en doute pas, vous n'y verrez aucune objection, que l'engagement devrait être bilatéral. Je pense que cela va de soi, mais il serait bien de le préciser. Au lieu des mots "des mesures qui pourraient être considérées comme une menace" nous préférons les mots "measures threatening."

Quant à votre Article IV (notre article III) il est clair que les provisions de cet article ne peuvent être mises en exécution qu'avec le consentement de l'Amir ; et nous y avons intercalé une réserve à cet effet. Je suis autorisé à prier le Gouvernement Impérial une fois qu'un accord est réalisé, de vouloir bien me faire savoir les points sur la frontière où il propose de placer les autorités Russes en question. Je serais heureux d'en être informé aussitôt que faire se pourra afin que mon Gouvernement pourrait communiquer sans délai à ce sujet avec l'Amir.

Nous sommes prêts à exclure votre Article VI, et nous avons remanié votre Article VII (notre Article IV) de façon à le rendre plus compréhensif. Vous y verrez une modification, à mon avis une excellente modification, de rédaction. Au lieu du "Gouvernement Impérial entrerait dans un échange de vues" nous proposons "the two Governments will agree as to what measures should be taken in this sense."

J'aime à croire que notre contre projet sera acceptable au Gouvernement Impérial, et je serai heureux de voir réaliser mon vœu sans trop de délai, car il est très à désirer de compléter aussitôt que possible nos Conventions concernant l'Afghanistan, la Perse et le Tibet.

Veuillez, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Sir A. Nicolson explained our views well.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 485.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 348.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 25, 1907.

R. July 2, 1907.

M. Isvolsky, in referring to Article III of the Draft Convention regarding Afghanistan, enquired of me what guarantee the Russian Government would possess that the Ameer would consent to Russian and Afghan frontier officials settling local questions of a non-political character. Supposing the Ameer were to refuse, what then? I told His Excellency that we would do our best to secure the consent of the Ameer, but it was clear that we could not tie his hands before he had been consulted. I trusted that the Ameer, when he had knowledge of the whole Convention, would be disposed to agree to the procedure which had been proposed. M. Isvolsky observed that perhaps the Russian Government might make a reservation in order to meet the possibility of a refusal on the part of the Ameer. He did not quite know what officers would be appointed or the localities where they would be placed. I said that the Russian Government could select the officers who were to be specifically designated for the purpose, and that I had already requested the Russian Government to indicate the localities in question. M. Isvolsky said that the Governor-General of Turkestan would have to be consulted. I remarked that this would take some time; to which he assented, and murmured something which I could not clearly catch as to the desirability of holding over certain points to be arranged subject to the signing of the Conventions.

It will be well to await the written reply of the Russian Government to the last proposals which I submitted to him; but I presume that His Majesty's Government would raise no objection to the consideration of Article III being deferred.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 486.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 358.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 3, 1907.

R. July 8, 1907.

M. Isvolsky told me this afternoon that he was not yet in a position to give me the reply of the Russian Government to our Draft Convention regarding Afghanistan, and he doubted if he would be able to do so for 8 or 10 days. I expressed my surprise at this notification as I had expected to receive a reply this day and I did not understand what difficulties could exist in the way of accepting our proposals. It was true that we had eliminated one or two unimportant articles of his draft project, that we had rearranged others, and interpolated a very necessary mention of the Treaties with the late Ameer. Surely, I said, this could give rise to no lengthy consideration, as all the principal points of his project had been preserved in their entirety. His Excellency said that the elimination of the Articles gave no cause for any objection, nor the rearrangement of some others, nor indeed,

the mention of the Ameer's engagements: but there were other points which required close examination. I enquired what they were. He said that he could not enumerate them off hand as he had not his papers by him. I pressed him to give me at least some indication of their nature. After a little time M. Isvolsky said he would instance the clause as to both parties engaging not to occupy nor to annex any portion of Afghanistan. As regards Russia this was an unconditional prohibition, but as regards Great Britain their engagement not to take measures was dependent on the Ameer fulfilling his Treaty obligations. What was Russia to do if the Ameer attacked her? I replied that I presumed that Russia would in that case defend herself, and as regards the condition laid down by Great Britain it was a very necessary condition: otherwise the present or some subsequent Ameer might imagine that he could violate his engagements with impunity. I could not see that any serious objections could be raised to the wording of that article.

M. Isvolsky then said that the Article regarding the relations between the Russian and Afghan frontier officials required to be carefully revised. In the first place we referred to "authorities on the frontier" while the Russian Government had mentioned "the authorities of the frontier provinces." The former might be only subordinate officers, and not competent to discharge the duties foreshadowed. I told him that here I thought he had forgotten the additional words, "specially designated for the purpose," and this phrase would enable the Russian Government to appoint special officers of a suitable rank. We had requested that they should notify to us the localities at which they would place such officers, so that we might communicate with the Ameer. His Excellency observed that there was a further question connected with this article, and which indeed applied to other portions of the Convention. We had made all the engagements by which Russia might benefit, such as the frontier relations and trade, dependent on the consent of the Ameer, while all the obligations which Russia took upon herself were to become operative immediately the Convention was signed. It amounted, therefore, that a personage who was not a contracting party, with whom Russia was not to treat directly, and over whose foreign relations Great Britain assumed control, could by a simple refusal render nugatory the stipulations of a Convention, in so far as they benefited Russia. This was a very one-sided arrangement and it appeared to him to be a strange and inconvenient situation, and one with which it was difficult to deal. The whole "appareil" was very "compliqué."

I told His Excellency that he seemed to be embarking on rather a large question if he wished to discuss British control over the foreign relations of the Ameer. I did not deny that perhaps this "appareil" was complicated, but it had worked very well for a number of years. In any case it was clear that we could not bind the Ameer or lay upon him obligations without consulting with him and obtaining his consent, and that consent I did not doubt that we should do our best to obtain. There was only one alternative and that would have been to have postponed signing the Convention until negotiations with the Ameer had been concluded, and this would have entailed much delay which neither he nor my Government desired. It was, therefore, clear that we had to insert a reservation as to the consent of the Ameer being requisite. I told His Excellency that if all these questions were to be threshed out once more, much time would elapse, and I really could not see the necessity of doing so. I would however wait for his written communication as we were merely discussing matters conversationally. M. Isvolsky said he was only making observations in a purely unofficial manner and the question then dropped. I should add that he hinted that perhaps a clause could be inserted stating that the Convention would not come into force until the Ameer had consented to the stipulations regarding frontier relations and trade.

I was, I confess, surprised at the general tone of M. Isvolsky's remarks, as they not only seemed to indicate a desire to place Russia on exactly the same footing as ourselves in respect to Afghanistan, but they were also in contradiction with an observation which he had made a day or two ago to me that the amendments which

the Russian Government would propose to our Draft Convention were merely small points of drafting. We must of course await the official written reply, which may not be of the character of his verbal observations.

M. Isvolsky repeated to me more than once his eager desire to speedily settle all the Conventions, but his language today, though always courteous and friendly, did not quite correspond with these admirable intentions.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 487.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, July 8, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 124.) Confidential.

D. 10.20 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

Afghanistan.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is not yet in a position to communicate their replies, and cannot tell me when he will be. He hopes in a week, but I do not rely on this.

I pressed him to tell me the difficulties. I gathered they will demur strongly to what he terms unconditional engagement on the part of Russia not to annex or occupy any portion of Afghanistan, and, after discussion, he gave me to understand they would probably wish to insert a saving clause—something to the effect that their engagement held good provided that no change occurred in actual state of things in Afghanistan. If any such proposal is made, I presume it would be quite inadmissible, as it would open wide door to Russian intervention.

In Article III I think that they will press for retention of their original wording "authorities of the frontier provinces" in preference to "authorities on the frontier."

I told him that I did not see at all necessity of changing the wording as the questions with which frontier officials would have to deal would be trifling ones, such as robberies of sheep and horses, and such like matters, which frontier officials could settle. He did not agree, and I said that they consider questions to be settled should be of a wider scope, which is, I imagine, precisely what we desire to avoid. He said that we apparently wished to restrict relations between Russian and Afghan officials within very narrow limits, and I replied that certainly we did so intend. He repeated his former objections to making execution of Articles depend on consent of Ameer. He endeavoured to prove to me that we had shifted our original ground, but this was easy to refute, and I explained that we had originally given Russian Government some bases on which we were prepared to negotiate, and that we had never deviated from the principles then laid down. In their counter project they had apparently wished that we should subscribe to engagements without consent of Ameer having been obtained, and this was manifestly impossible. I told him that our attitude had been logical and consistent throughout.

Our conversation was quite friendly, and he assured me that he was most anxious to terminate negotiations, but that he had to discuss all Afghan matters once more with the General Staff, and I imagine that they are making difficulties. I was not at all satisfied with our conversation this afternoon, but I report to you to let you know line on which they are apparently running.

I am afraid that in the circumstances it will be quite impossible to finish the negotiations before Parliament rises, and Minister for Foreign Affairs said he feared they would take some time yet.

MINUTE.

This Afghan Convention is, I fear, likely to give trouble and may require some straight talking.

The engagement to be taken by Russia "not to annex or occupy any portion of Afghanistan" was dealt with in our tel[egram] of yesterday to Sir A. Nicolson,⁽¹⁾ and the insertion which we now hear of as suggested by M. Isvolsky would be quite inadmissible.

I do not think we could reasonably admit in Art[icle] III the Russian wording "authorities of the frontier provinces" instead of "authorities of the frontier" although we are perfectly well aware that the "authorities of the frontier provinces" do correspond with the Russian provincial Authorities on the other side of the frontier.

We have always been perfectly consistent in this matter and Lord Lansdowne in his d[ra]ft letter sent to C[oun]t Benckendorff on Feb[ruary] 17, 1905,⁽²⁾ alluded to "the interchange of communications between the Russian and Afghan frontier officials on non-political questions of a local character," as the words used by C[oun]t Benckendorff to define the change which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t wished to obtain in their relations with Afghanistan. Unfortunately this letter was only sent to C[oun]t Benckendorff in d[ra]ft form, so we cannot assume that in the absence of a denial, the words hold good as being the view of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t at that time. Still they represent what Lord Lansdowne understood C[oun]t Benckendorff to state to him and consequently are of importance. As a matter of fact I find no previous mention of "authorities on the frontier," but in April 1903 L[or]d Lansdowne suggested to the I[ndia] O[ffice] "That communications between Russian and Afghan local officials on either side of the frontier should be permitted etc. . . ."⁽³⁾ The difference between this wording and that of the Russian text "authorities of the frontier provinces" is not at all clearly defined.

C. H.

E. G.

[July 9, 1907.]

(1) [This refers to the telegram to which the present minute is attached.]

(2) [v. *supra*, pp. 520-1, No. 466 (a).]

(3) [v. *supra*, p. 516, No. 465.]

No. 488.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 103.)

Foreign Office, July 8, 1907.

Your tel[egram] No. 119.

Afghanistan.

Point no. 1.

You should explain to M. Isvolsky that the real objection to giving an unconditional pledge not to annex nor occupy Afghan territory is that this would modify our *locus standi* with the Ameer which at present rests on the Treaty contracted with him and that although we should be most unwilling to annex to occupy Afghan territory the fear that we may do so is the chief incentive to the Ameer to observe his Treaty obligations towards us. It also serves as a means of exerting pressure upon the Ameer in the event of a dispute between him and the Russian Gov[ernmen]t.

Point no. 2.

It is perfectly true that we are unable to compel the Ameer to accept obligations which may be distasteful to him except by exerting pressure upon him. Consequently it is preferable to obtain in the first place his voluntary consent, and the admission in the agreement that such consent is necessary is more likely to produce the desired result than if no mention of it at all were made. Further the omission of the qualifying clause would make it necessary for us to defer signing the agreement till the Ameer's consent to the proposed arrangement for direct communications had been received.

No. 489.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 104.)

Afghanistan.

Your tel[egram] No. 124.⁽¹⁾

Your language approved.

The "saving clause" which you understood M. Isvolsky to say the Russian Gov[ernmen]t would probably wish to insert would be quite inadmissible for the reason you mention.

You should inform M. Isvolsky that we must insist on the maintenance in Art[icle] III of the wording "authorities on the frontier specially designated for the purpose" as being practically the same as that used by C[oun]t Benckendorff to L[or]d Lansdowne on Feb[ruary] 17, 1905 when stating the change which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t desired in the *status quo* on the Afghan frontier, and you may express the hope that no further difficulty will be raised on this point.

Even with this wording the door is opened to intervention by Russian officials in the affairs of Afghanistan and we have to rely upon the good faith of Russian authorities to see that the provision is not improperly used. The Russian Gov[ernmen]t must also rely upon our good faith to use all our influence to secure a friendly attitude towards Russia and equal facilities for Russian trade on the part of the Ameer, and our mention of the Ameer's consent is due to our desire and intention to preserve his internal independence, which is also what the Russian Gov[ernmen]t wish us to do. As to our engagement not to annex or occupy being conditional we must preserve our right to bring pressure to bear on the Ameer in the event of intolerable provocation on his part. We do not anticipate such a contingency; the Russian Gov[ernmen]t must trust us not to make use of force except in last resort, and under no circumstances to use our influence in a manner hostile to Russia. If we did so, the whole agreement would come to an end, but we cannot tie our hands further than is proposed.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 549, No. 487.]

No. 490.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, July 13, 1907.*

D. 8.22 P.M.

R. 11 P.M.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 126.)

Afghanistan.

I had a long conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon,⁽¹⁾ which he initiated on subject of draft Convention. Their reply is evidently nearly prepared, as he consulted a document during conversation, though I doubt if I shall receive it for a few days.

(¹) [A fuller account of this interview was given by Sir A. Nicolson in his despatch No. 375 of July 14, 1907. In this despatch Sir A. Nicolson stated that he had suggested privately to M. Isvolski "that, if he agreed with me, I thought that before I received his proposals formerly in writing I had better run over to London to consult with you." On the 14th M. Isvolski said he thought this desirable, and would give Sir A. Nicolson his view in writing before he left. These views are expressed in the memorandum enclosed in the succeeding document. Sir A. Nicolson accordingly visited London, returning to St. Petersburg early in August.]

[16942]

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He said that Russian Government would probably agree to eliminate their Article I as to buffer State, but would probably suggest some clause in preamble as to both Governments recognizing integrity and independence of Afghanistan. I let that observation pass by, as it will be as well to await their proposal in writing. He then dwelt at length as to the necessity of modifying our proposal that Russia should unconditionally agree not to annex any part of Afghanistan.

I told him I felt sure my Government would not be disposed to accept any condition. As unprovoked aggression on the part of the Ameer on the Russian frontier was inconceivable, and I inquired what condition did he suggest, and to meet what eventuality. He said a disturbance of the *status quo*. I inquired if he meant that if, on the death of the Ameer, disorders were to break out, Russia should have a right to intervene, for in that case we could not admit that Russia should be placed on equal footing with us, and have a door open to intervene. He said this was not the preoccupation of the Russian Government. They wished to anticipate an annexation or occupation by us of Afghanistan, which would change existing situation.

I will send full report by messenger of arguments employed on both sides: result was that I think they will suggest addition to Russian undertaking of a clause, "provided that no change occurs in existing political situation," or words to that effect. I told him my Government would, I thought, have very serious objections to such a saving clause, and he said that Russian Government would have to insist on some such clause. I anticipate great difficulty on this point, but I let him see we attached very great importance to our wording; as to frontier relations, we practically went over old ground and made no headway. He understood that we had to insert clause as to necessity of obtaining consent of Ameer, but said he would have to propose some additional Article as to Convention entering into force when consent of Ameer was obtained.

I told him I had no desire to press him, but I might indicate that before end of August Cabinet would disperse for summer vacation, and it would be well if I could receive his reply before long. He said he trusted to let me have it in a few days.

(Confidential.)

He was a little excited to-day though, of course, friendly, and I think the General Staff are insisting strenuously on his maintaining his objections.

No. 491.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 386.)

St. Petersburg, D. July 19, 1907.

Sir,

R. July 23, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a memorandum which M. Isvolsky has given me privately and which embodies in an unofficial form the views and *desiderata* of the Russian Government in regard to the counterdraft presented by His Majesty's Government concerning the Convention to be concluded in respect to Afghanistan.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [This refers to the draft handed to M. Isvolski on June 17, v. *supra*, pp. 541-4, No. 483, column 2.]

Enclosure in No. 491.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Les contre-propositions anglaises relatives à la Convention sur l'Afghanistan offrent matière à de certaines observations, et parmi celles-ci quelques-unes demanderaient à être spécialement étudiées de part et d'autre afin de trouver à chacune d'elles une solution équitable et satisfaisante pour les deux Parties.

Nous n'attachons pas une importance particulière au terme "état-tampon" appliqué à l'Afghanistan et que l'Angleterre voudrait voir éliminé, bien que ce terme ait à notre avis l'avantage de donner une idée nette du rôle que cet Etat est appelé à jouer entre les possessions anglaises et russes dans l'Asie Centrale. Mais il y aurait, d'après nous, quelque inconvénient à supprimer complètement l'article I^{er} qui définit la position internationale de l'Afghanistan. Cet article devrait être rédigé de manière à exprimer clairement que l'Angleterre et la Russie s'entendent pour maintenir le *statu quo* politique de ce pays comme, par exemple, cela a été fait pour le Maroc et l'Egypte dans la Convention Anglo-française de l'année 1904.

L'article II du projet anglais, tout en établissant pour l'Angleterre l'obligation de ne pas occuper ni annexer une partie quelconque du territoire de l'Afghanistan, subordonne cette obligation à la condition que l'Emir de son côté ne déroge en rien aux stipulations du traité conclu entre l'Angleterre et lui. Nous reconnaissons volontiers que le Cabinet de Londres a des motifs sérieux pour formuler cette réserve; mais l'Angleterre étant complètement libre de juger les actes de l'Emir, il pourrait en résulter, à tout moment donné, l'occupation ou même l'annexion d'une partie de l'Afghanistan ou de ce pays tout entier; d'autre part le même article oblige la Russie, d'une manière absolue et inconditionnelle, à respecter en toute circonstance l'intégrité et l'inviolabilité de ce pays. Nous pourrions donc, aux termes mêmes de la convention, nous trouver inopinément en présence d'une modification profonde de la situation politique en Asie Centrale. Il nous semble qu'il serait nécessaire de prévoir ce cas et de reconnaître que la Russie, qui attache la plus grande importance à la conservation de l'équilibre politique dans ces régions, aura la faculté de décider si par le fait d'une occupation ou d'une annexion du territoire afghan, il n'est pas survenu dans l'ordre des choses établi un changement de nature à la délier de ses engagements.

Parmi les droits concédés, en vertu de la Convention projetée, à la Russie il en est de tels dont elle ne pourrait jouir que dans le cas où l'Angleterre y obtiendrait le consentement de l'Emir. Les dispositions ayant trait aux relations directes entre les autorités russes et afghanes et aux agents commerciaux en font mention explicitement; quant aux faveurs réservées au commerce russe, la rédaction du paragraphe y relatif, bien qu'elle n'invoque pas les droits de l'Emir, implique néanmoins la nécessité de son consentement préalable. Dans ces conditions les avantages dont devrait bénéficier la Russie pourraient devenir illusoire, car en s'imposant des obligations incontestables, elle obtiendrait en retour des droits encore à acquérir. Pour remédier à cet inconvénient il faudrait compléter l'accord par un article établissant que la convention n'entrerait en vigueur que du moment où la Russie pourrait jouir en réalité des droits qui lui sont réservés, ou bien aussitôt que l'Angleterre lui aurait notifié le consentement de l'Emir. D'autre part, pour mieux rendre l'idée, comme nous l'entendions au début des négociations, de voir les sujets, les commerçants et le commerce russes et britanniques ou anglo-indiens placés en Afghanistan sur le même pied au point de vue des droits de douane, des taxes intérieures et sous tous les autres rapports, il serait bien de la préciser dans la Convention même et d'amplifier dans ce sens le passage qui s'y rapporte.

L'expression du projet russe "les autorités des provinces frontières" a été remplacée dans le contre-projet anglais par les mots: "autorités à la frontière." Nous voudrions croire qu'il n'y a là qu'une distinction de rédaction et qu'au fond les deux Gouvernements entendent la chose de la même manière. Si par contre,

le Gouvernement Anglais avait l'intention de voir les relations dont traite l'article III confiées aux autorités subalternes résidant sur la frontière même, il y aurait à objecter qu'un tel ordre de choses présenterait de graves inconvénients: les autorités mentionnées ne sont nullement appropriées aux fonctions qui leur seraient imposées et leur incompétence en la matière pourrait devenir dans certains cas une cause de malentendus et de complications. Il serait donc désirable de ne point exclure les autorités respectives investies de pouvoirs plus étendus du nombre de celles qui seraient chargées des relations directes en question.

No. 492.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 295.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 8, 1907.

I enclose to you herewith copy of a mem[orandum] drawn up in this Dep[artment], after consultation by me with the S[ecretary] of S[tate] for India, setting forth the views of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in reply to the observations contained in the unofficial mem[orandum] upon the British counterdraft of the proposed Convention relating to Afghanistan, handed to you by M. Isvolsky, and forwarded in your despatch No. 386 of the 19th July.⁽¹⁾ You are authorised to give a copy of this mem[orandum] to M. Isvolsky and to express the hope that the conciliatory attitude adopted by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in meeting H[is] E[xcellency]'s views may be the means of removing all remaining difficulties and of arriving at a complete and early agreement.

In the event of the Russian Gov[ernment] declining to agree to the deletion of the last sentence of Art[icle] II of our counterd[r]aft you are authorised as an alternative solution to propose the maintenance of Art[icle] II as it now stands with the addition of the following sentence:—

“Should any change occur in the political status of Afghanistan the two Governments will enter into a friendly interchange of views on the subject.”

I enclose at the same time a copy of the declaration relating to British interests in the Persian Gulf which I propose to make either in Parliament or in a published despatch to you, after the conclusion of the agreement, and you are authorised to communicate a copy to M. Isvolsky at the moment which may appear most suitable to Y[our] E[xcellency] for doing so.⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 492.

Memorandum.

The mem[orandum] given privately by M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson, embodying in an unofficial form the views of the Russian Gov[ernment] on the counterdraft presented by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] of the Convention to be concluded in respect to Afghanistan, has received most friendly and careful consideration with a view to finding a means for satisfying the legitimate demands of both Parties.

The following are the views of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] on the points raised by M. Isvolsky:—

Although the expression “buffer State” was undoubtedly used in conversation by Lord Lansdowne to C[oun]t Benckendorff as applying to Afghanistan its meaning

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [For this enclosure, v. *supra*, p. 497, *Ed. note*.]

is ambiguous and incapable of definition. It was therefore considered desirable to omit this expression as a description of the geographical and political situation of Afghanistan. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would however entertain no objection to the first Article of the Convention containing words similar to the Anglo-French Declaration of 1904 relating to Egypt and Morocco, which would be in the following terms :—

“ His Britannic Majesty declares that he has no intention of altering the political status of Afghanistan.”

As regards the objections raised to the terms of Art[icle] II of the British counter-draft H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] view with satisfaction the fact that the Russian Gov[ernment] appreciate the serious reasons which necessitate a certain freedom on the part of Great Britain in her relations with the Ameer of Afghanistan in order to secure the proper observance by H[is] M[ajesty] of his Treaty obligations towards H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. Any restriction of such liberty of action on the part of Great Britain could not fail to imperil gravely the peace of Central Asia by encouraging the Ameer and his subjects to ignore the Treaties by which the relations existing between Great Britain and Afghanistan are governed. Such an eventuality as hostile operations by British forces in Afghanistan must always be kept in view, not merely in defence of Anglo-Afghan Treaties, but also to secure the observance of the terms of the present Convention. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], while undertaking to exercise their influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense towards Russia, have no desire to modify in any way the actual situation in Afghanistan nor to disturb the existing political equilibrium in those regions.

With a view to removing the objections of the Russian Gov[ernment] to an unconditional undertaking on their part not to annex or to occupy any part of Afghanistan while a similar undertaking on the part of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] remains conditional on the fulfilment by the Ameer of his Treaty obligations, H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment], having full confidence in the friendly intentions of the Russian Gov[ernment], and considering that the contingency will be covered by the engagement contained in Art[icle] I of the British counter-draft, will agree to the deletion of the last sentence of Art[icle] II, beginning with “ On the other hand” and ending with “ Ameer.”

The concessions offered to Russia in Art[icles] III and IV relating to the establishment of direct relations between the frontier officials on local questions of a non-political character, and to the equality of commercial opportunity for British and Russian trade in Afghanistan, would be rendered nugatory by a hostile attitude towards them on the part of the Ameer. The consent of the Ameer to the fulfilment of the terms of these two Articles becomes therefore an essential condition of their validity, and cannot be ignored by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] in treating with the Russian Gov[ernment] questions affecting the sovereign rights of the Ameer of Afghanistan. The consent of the Ameer can no doubt be obtained, but the spirit in which it is given is of importance to avoid difficulties in the proper fulfilment of his obligations. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] therefore recognise the force of M. Isvolsky's observations as to the possibility of the benefits to be acquired by Russia from this Convention proving illusory for the moment owing to reluctance on the part of the Ameer to give the desired consent to the concessions made to Russia in Art[icles] III and IV, and although they will not lose time, after the signature of the Convention, in making the necessary communications to the Ameer, H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] will be prepared to meet M. Isvolsky's wishes and to accept the addition of an Article providing that the Convention will not come into force until H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] have notified to the Russian Gov[ernment] the consent of the Ameer to its terms.

The desire expressed for the amplification of Art[icle] IV appears to be hardly well-founded since its terms are very comprehensive. It implies that any negotiation carried on with the Ameer by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] for the benefit of

British trade or traders will, *ipso facto*, be for the equal benefit of Russian trade or traders, and that any commercial concessions obtained from the Ameer will automatically be to the advantage of the trade and traders of both nations.

As regards the Russian and Afghan frontier officials who are to be authorised to enter into direct relations with each other on local questions of a non-political character, the essential point, in the view of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t, is that certain officials residing either on the frontier or in the frontier provinces, should be specially designated by the Russian and Afghan Gov[ernmen]ts for that purpose. It is important, by limiting the number of those authorised to enter into direct relations with the Afghan officials, to avoid causing alarm to the Ameer by the new change in the situation, and also to insure that difficulties on the frontier may not be created by the passage of communications between unauthorised persons.

No. 493.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 409.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 13, 1907.

R. August 19, 1907.

I called on Mr. Isvolsky yesterday afternoon and informed His Excellency that I was now in a position to communicate to him the views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the observations which he had made respecting the British counter-draft concerning Afghanistan and which he had embodied in a Memorandum for my information and guidance during my recent visit to London.⁽¹⁾ I added that I had been fortunate in having had opportunities of conversing with those members of His Majesty's Government who were principally and more directly interested in the subject of our negotiations and that the proposals which I was about to submit to him could be taken as representing the well-considered opinions of the British Government.

I told Mr. Isvolsky that it would be simpler if I read to him a memorandum which had been prepared on the subject as it expressed very clearly the nature of the proposals which His Majesty's Government were prepared to make.⁽²⁾

His Excellency listened attentively to my perusal of the document and on its termination he remarked that certainly a great step had been made towards an agreement and that he would like to study the memorandum.—a copy of which I handed to him—, carefully before giving a final opinion. I said that although I did not expect him to pronounce himself on the subject offhand, I trusted that his impressions of the document were favourable, as he would see that we had gone as far as was possible in meeting the wishes and desiderata of the Russian Government.

His Excellency replied that his first impressions were distinctly favourable and he appeared to have no objection to any portions of the memorandum.

I expressed the hope that we should now be able to conclude our negotiations within a very few days, as it seemed to me that there was no obstacle to our doing so. His Excellency said that I could rely with confidence on his doing his utmost to push matters on, but that he would not be able to see the Emperor this week as His Majesty would be engaged with the General Staff until Saturday in the manœuvres now taking place in the vicinity of St. Petersburg. I understood from His Excellency that he would forward the memorandum and other papers which I left with him to the Emperor without delay.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 553-4, No. 491, encl.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. enclosure in immediately preceding document.*]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 147.)

St. Petersburg, D. August 17, 1907, 8.19 P.M.

R. August 18, 1907, 8 A.M.

Afghanistan.

Contrary to my hopes I am afraid Russian Gov[ernmen]t will not agree to simple deletion of the last part of Clause II. I had informal talk with Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] this afternoon and am to see him again on Tuesday to go fully into the matter.

He considers simple deletion does not entirely remove Russian objections. His argument is that contractual obligations taken in regard to an object cannot remain in full force if a change occurs in the object. We might have to occupy Afghanistan if Amir infringed stipulations or even annex portions of it, and Russia could not then be held to remain quite silent and passive. He asked why formula I had suggested before leaving Petersburg had not been accepted.⁽¹⁾ I told him that frankly we thought it placed Russia more or less on the same footing as ourselves in regard to Afghanistan and left a door open to Russian intervention. He asked how this could possibly be maintained if we read Article I where Russia distinctly engaged that Afghanistan was outside her sphere, etc. He said he had two solutions in view either that an additional article should be inserted at the end of the Convention to the effect that the two Governments would interchange views if the political situation were altered or that he should write a despatch to the Russian Ambassador in London to be published with the Convention saying that if political situation were changed Russia was freed from her obligations. I told him that latter solution would never do. Above is informal and private and he will speak officially to me on Tuesday. I have given him no idea that I am authorized to make a concession but please tell me which of following solutions you would prefer in case I find simple deletion impossible.

- (i.) To insert formula I am authorized to propose at the end of new article I, or
- (ii.) to insert it as a separate article at the end of the Convention or
- (iii.) to insert it at end of present article 2 after engagement on the part of Russia not to annex or occupy.

I should be inclined to adopt solution No. 2 and say nothing in article 2 as to Russia not annexing etc. since I now think such a possibility had on the whole better not even be contemplated as we have tied her down by Article I very tightly and it might look as if she were on an equal footing with us.

Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that at present Russia was quite free to do as she liked with regard to Afghanistan: of course it would be an unfriendly act but it would not be a violation of any obligations. After signature of convention her position would be quite different and she would be closely bound. For that reason also he said some clause should be inserted stating that if change occurred in the situation the two Gov[ernmen]ts would speak together.

(1) [This would appear to be a reference to the proposed addition to Article II contained in Sir E. Grey's despatch No. 295 of August 8, 1907, *supra*, p. 554, No. 492. No evidence has been found however to suggest that Sir A. Nicolson mentioned this to M. Tsvolski before leaving St. Petersburg.]

No. 495.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, August 18, 1907.*

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 149.)

D. 2 P.M.

R. 3 P.M.

Afghanistan.

My tel[egram] No. 147 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

I intend to resist as far as is safe and possible the introduction of any fresh clause but Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] will evidently press hard for some formula of the nature indicated.

His programme on Tuesday is to communicate to me a draft project based on our last proposals and he will wish me to tell him whether there is anything in it unacceptable to my Government. If there be we shall have to thresh matter out there and then and when a common ground has been found he will then take steps to obtain consent of the Emperor and interested Ministries. He is anxious to push matters on and have no further discussions or references home. Tuesday will therefore be an important day and I hope that I may before that date receive your views as to which of the three solutions I proposed in my telegram No. 147 is considered most acceptable.

It is, I know, most essential that we should in no wise weaken our special position in Afghanistan but I think that we should rather be emphasizing it by not insisting on Russia taking any engagement similar to our own in regard to non-occupation etc. and it might be best to ignore the possibility of her wishing to occupy. Her engagements under Article I moreover exclude her from taking any action whatever diplomatic or otherwise in the country. I admit above view is not in accordance with (proposal ?) I ventured to suggest when in London but on thinking over matter and conversing here I would now with all deference submit that a separate article with a general formula like the one I have brought with me would be preferable to reviving the final clause of Article 2 and adding the formula to it.

(1) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 496.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 140.)

Foreign Office, August 19, 1907.

D. 3 P.M.

If it is necessary to insert formula we wish to retain last part of Article II, which will help to recommend agreement to the Amir; but we should decidedly prefer that formula should be inserted as a separate Article instead of appearing directly after words in Article II as if it was a special qualification of them. You should therefore press for this solution if formula is demanded.

No. 497.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, August 19, 1907.*

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 150.)

D. 8.23 P.M.

R. 11 P.M.

Afghanistan.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to see him this afternoon, and has communicated to me a draft Convention as to Afghanistan. The only important

point is the additional Article concerning exchange of views in case of change of political status.

I tried hard to have no Article inserted, but he practically said that Russia could not sign without it. Article runs as follows:—

“If any modification whatever occurs in political status of Afghanistan, the High Contracting Parties will enter into a friendly interchange of views with the object of insuring the maintenance of the equilibrium in Central Asia.”

His Excellency said he thought in place of the latter part, of proposing “interchange of views on the subject,” but he suggested present wording so as not to give impression that Russia wished to interfere with relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan.

I should be grateful for early reply if I may accept this Article.

There are one or two other modifications, but of no serious importance, and I will telegraph them tomorrow.

No. 498.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 20, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

D. 2.49 P.M.

Tel. (No. 151.)

R. 5 P.M.

Draft of the Afghan Convention.

Following are the modifications proposed by the French translation:—

In preamble, “in order to assure” is translated by “animated with sincere desire to assure.”

Article I is “His Britannic Majesty’s Government declares it has no intention of changing political status in Afghanistan,” and then continues with engagements on the part of Russian Government as enumerated in former Article I.

Art[icle] II is literal translation of our Article II. Words “having recorded” are translated by “having declared,” as there is no good French word for “recorded.”

The last sentence in French translation runs as follows:—

“Great Britain further engages to exercise her influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense, and will not herself take and will not encourage Afghanistan to take any measures threatening Russia.” He thought “Russian frontier” a little narrow, as the Ameer might take measures not specially against frontier. To avoid repeating the word “Russia” he omitted it after “pacific sense.”

Art[icle] III in French translation runs as follows: “The Russian and Afghan authorities specially designated for the purpose may establish direct reciprocal relations for settling local questions of a non-political character.” He has omitted “on the frontier” or “in the frontier provinces,” as if they are specially designated he thinks he has met our views, and it would make a very clumsy wording, adding, “on the frontier or in the frontier provinces,” and moreover words are unnecessary, as the special officers must reside on or near the frontier.

Allusion to consent of Ameer is omitted, as there is a special Article to that effect.

Art[icle] IV is the same as our Article IV down to “Russian traders,” with the insertion of the word “trade.” It stops there, and he has said nothing as to Commercial Agents. I presume you do not wish me to propose that they should be mentioned.

Art[icle] V says "the present Arrangements will only enter into force from the moment when the British Government has notified to the Russian Government the consent of the Ameer to the terms above stipulated."

Art[icle] VI is the Article regarding change in political status which I telegraphed last night in my telegram No. 150.⁽¹⁾

Art[icle] VII. The present Convention will be ratified, and ratifications will be exchanged at St. Petersburg as soon as possible.

Throughout the Convention, in place of Sovereigns, he has mentioned British and Russian Governments. He assures me this is more correct, and I suppose we can accept it. Of course, in the preamble, Sovereigns name Plenipotentiaries. He says that a Convention of this formal nature must be ratified. Perhaps it is more usual, and I have no fear that they will not ratify shortly after signature, and ratification will be more binding in the future.

I should be grateful of reply to this telegram as soon as possible.

(1) [*i. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 499.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 20, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

D. 2.53 P.M.

Tel. (No. 152.)

R. 4.45 P.M.

I may mention that I told Minister for Foreign Affairs that it had always been a cardinal point in the policy of Great Britain, as regards Afghanistan, not to admit or to recognise direct or indirect intervention of any Third Power in the external or internal affairs of Afghanistan: that this principle has been adopted by the Amir and fully recognised by Persia. It would therefore constitute a grave departure from that principle if it were provided in a Convention that a third Power could in certain eventualities be empowered to have a consulting voice in the relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan.

His Excellency said he understood this and in drafting the proposed new Article he had carefully used such terms as would show no wish on the part of Russia to interfere with the relations above mentioned. I said I did not quite see what was meant by maintenance of equilibrium. He said he had purposely made terms as mild as possible and he merely wished to afford an opportunity for discussion in case of a change in Afghanistan without implying that Russia wished for intervention.

No. 500.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 20, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

D. 2.48 P.M.

Tel. (No. 153.)

R. 5.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 140: Afghanistan.⁽¹⁾

I told Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday that I thought that it was possible that if you accepted proposed new Article⁽²⁾ you would ask for retention of final clause

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 558, No. 496.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 559, No. 497.]

of Article II. He said that Russia already by Article I of Convention could not annex or occupy, and in fact was debarred from any action whatever in any circumstances in Afghanistan, and if she took active measures it would be a simple act of war. If I am to press the point, he might observe that in our last Memorandum⁽³⁾ we admit that Article I does satisfactorily cover question, and we had consequently deleted final clause. I really think that we are quite safe without it, and, indeed, that our special position is more clearly apparent. Would not Article I amply satisfy all Ameer's requirements as to Russia's abstention?

I should be grateful for your final decision if possible before Thursday. If Emperor approves draft Convention, I am sure it will be pushed through other Ministries without change or delay.

(3) [v. *supra*, pp. 554-6, No. 492, *encl.*]

No. 501.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 146.)

Foreign Office, August 21, 1907.

D. 9 P.M.

Your telegram 153.⁽¹⁾

We would agree to omission of final sentence of Article II only on condition of first sentence also being omitted. The middle sentence from "His Britannic Majesty further undertakes" down to "Russian frontier" might be inserted in Article I, which would then cover our pledges to Russia as well as her pledges to us, and Article II would disappear. You should propose this to M. Isvolsky as we think it would be an improvement.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 502.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 147.)

Foreign Office, August 21, 1907.

D. 9 P.M.

Your tel[egram] 150.⁽¹⁾

We cannot agree to the words proposed by M. Isvolsky. They are so ambiguous that they might give rise to unforeseen demands and complications and we could not have the word "whatever." You should therefore ask M. Isvolsky to accept as an additional article the formula authorised as an alternative in the last instructions drawn up with you here.⁽²⁾

(1) [v. *supra*, pp. 558-9, No. 497.]

(2) [v. *supra*, pp. 554-6, No. 492, and *encl.*]

No. 503.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Foreign Office, August 21, 1907.

Tel. (No. 148.)

D. 9 P.M.

Your tel[egram] 151.⁽¹⁾

In Article III words "on the frontier or in the frontier provinces" should be put in. They could be inserted after the word "purpose."

No objection to other alterations except as regards Article II dealt with in previous telegram. We very much prefer omission of any reference to Commercial Agents and hope it is intentional. You should endeavour to prevent its reappearance.

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 559-60, No. 498.]

No. 504.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

St. Petersburg, D. August 21, 1907.

(No. 430.)

R. September 3, 1907.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit, herewith, a copy of a Draft Convention concerning Afghanistan, which M. Isvolsky communicated to me on the 19th instant.⁽¹⁾ I have had two lengthy interviews with His Excellency on the subject, and I will condense into this despatch a report of both my conversations.

The only important point at issue between the two Governments is whether an Article should be inserted in the Convention imposing on His Majesty's Government, in the event of a change arising in the political status of Afghanistan, the obligation to discuss matters with the Russian Government.

I have maintained in conversing with M. Isvolsky the following attitude.

I have explained clearly to him that a cardinal point in the policy of Great Britain in regard to Afghanistan has always been to exclude the intervention, direct or indirect, of any third party in the external or internal affairs of the latter country: and I have stated that this policy has been admitted by the Ameer, and fully recognised by Persia his western neighbour. Were His Majesty's Government to admit the formal recognition in a Convention of the right of a third party, in certain eventualities, to have a consultative voice in the relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan, a grave departure would be made from the policy, hitherto, pursued. I have impressed on His Excellency that Russia having recognised that Afghanistan is outside of her sphere of influence it is of no real moment to her what may occur in that country, so long as no aggressive action is taken in respect to her frontiers: and I have further indicated that the engagements undertaken by Great Britain to use her influence in Afghanistan in a pacific sense, and not to undertake herself nor to encourage the Ameer to take any measures threatening the Russian frontier, should calm any apprehensions which may be felt by the Russian Government. I have also pointed out to M. Isvolsky that the concessions which I was authorized to make, and which were embodied in the Memorandum which I brought with me on my return from London, should convince him of the conciliatory and friendly spirit of His Majesty's Government and that I had confidently anticipated that these concessions would have completely satisfied the Russian Government. Such in brief resumé is the substance

* Identical with text inclosed in Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 432 of August 24, 1907.⁽²⁾—A. N.

(1) [*cp. supra*, pp. 558-60, Nos. 497-8.]

(2) [Not reproduced. Its contents are indicated by Tel. No. 151 of August 20, *supra*, pp. 559-60, No. 498.]

of the arguments which I have laid before M. Isvolsky in the course of our recent interviews.

M. Isvolsky, on the other hand, while cordially and fully recognising the friendly attitude of His Majesty's Government, has maintained that Russia by the Convention has formally admitted that she has no right to interfere in Afghanistan, directly or indirectly, and has distinctly acknowledged the exclusive position of Great Britain in regard to that country. This he considers should remove entirely any apprehensions or mistrust on the part of Great Britain as to the aims of Russia. If after the signature of the Convention, Russia were to take action of any character whatsoever in Afghanistan, it would be a violation of the Convention and constitute an act of war. He contends that by the Convention entire liberty of action is retained by Great Britain. It is true that she engages not to interfere in Afghan affairs, nor to annex or occupy any portion of Afghan territory, but these undertakings are dependent on the loyal observance by the Ameer of his engagements, and Great Britain is the sole judge of the mode in which that dignitary performs his obligations. Russia does not wish to limit this liberty of action nor to have a consultative voice in the relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan. But Russia is a neighbour of Afghanistan with a long conterminous frontier, and it cannot be asserted that what occurs in Afghanistan is of no concern to her. All that Russia requests is that, in the event of any alteration in the political status of Afghanistan, whether by annexation or occupation on the part of Great Britain or on account of other contingencies, His Majesty's Government would agree to enter into an amicable interchange of views with her, so that the equilibrium in Central Asia should be maintained. He considers that this is not only a reasonable request, but is one on which the Russian Government must insist, as Russia could not possibly view with indifference the establishment of the forces of Great Britain or of British administration in closer propinquity to the Russian frontier or in occupation of strategical positions in Afghanistan. The article which he proposes provides for such an interchange of views; it does not imply that Great Britain is to concert with Russia as to how she is to deal with a recalcitrant or defaulting Ameer, nor does it lead to Russia's interference in the relations between Great Britain and that personage. It simply provides for the case when a change occurs in Afghanistan, the object of the present Convention, and requests that an interchange of views should take place.

I think I have given as fairly as is possible, in a short summary, the gist of M. Isvolsky's observations. I would desire to place this on record, although I have telegraphed the main substance of them. I would beg leave to reserve for another despatch the explanations which he gave me as to other less important amendments, which he had suggested should be introduced into the Draft Convention.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Mr. Morley should see it; it states very well what the Russian feeling is and the point that M. Isvolsky was driving at.

E. G.

No. 505.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 23, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 162.) Confidential.

D. 8 A.M.

R. 12 noon.

Afghanistan Draft Convention.

M. Isvolsky gives me to understand that your proposed amendments including those as to Article 2 and the additional Article 6 will be accepted and that I shall have

[16942]

2 o 2

official reply tomorrow. I could not get Commercial Agents dropped as we had already accepted it and omission was a pure oversight of clerk.

M. Isvolsky, in the sentence formerly in Article 2 and now in Article 1 as to our exercising our influence in a pacific sense etc. has begged that word "Russia" instead of "Russian frontier" should be used. I gather you have no objection to this and so I have agreed. It is a small point and so I hope you agree. I told him I thought Amir could hardly threaten Russia but he might annoy frontier.⁽¹⁾

(¹) [Sir E. Grey concurred in Tel. (No. 156) of August 23, 1907.]

No. 506.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 25, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 168.)

D. 5 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

Afghan draft Convention.

An unexpected and serious hitch has occurred. Minister for Foreign Affairs had obtained consent of the Emperor to texts of Agreements on their way to you, provided Council of Ministers unanimously agreed to them. Council was held last night, and lasted until 2 o'clock in the morning. Strong opposition was developed, which was eventually concentrated on two points on which Minister for Foreign Affairs with Prime Minister and one military Member were in a minority.

The majority required that first paragraph of former Article 2 down to "under above-mentioned Treaty" be inserted in the Convention either as separate Article or interpolated in new Article I. They also considered that in Article concerning trade relations the words "equality of commercial treatment" did not necessarily imply equality of customs duties, and they wish that I should write a note to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to be published with the Convention to following effect:—

"I am authorized by my Government to explain that equality of treatment as regards commerce implies equality of all commercial rights, including custom duties."

After some difficulty all the other texts &c. were agreed to.

As to trade matters I told him equality of commercial treatment could not be wider or clearer, but I would refer question to you.

As to the other more serious question, I said I was convinced my Government would either insist, firstly, on maintenance of old Article II, including unconditional agreement on the part of Russia, or, secondly, on deletion of that engagement, but also in that case suppression of additional Article as to exchange of views in case of change in political status.

It is not necessary to argue with him, as he is of our opinion, but the majority of Council would, he is sure, accept neither of above alternatives. In two words, majority of Council require maintenance of old Article II, without any engagement on the part of Russia, but with additional Article.

I said I would place case before you, and await your decision.

(Confidential.)

He explains to me that, unless he can secure unanimous decision of Council, Emperor will have to decide between opinion of minority and that of majority. Should His Majesty go with former, execution of Convention would be very difficult, and most of good effects of the Agreement would be lost. If His Majesty went with majority, Minister for Foreign Affairs would probably have to resign, and, in any case, Conven-

tions would be lost. If, on the other hand, His Majesty's Government agree to what majority desire, difficulty is removed and unanimity is obtained.

Yesterday Minister for Foreign Affairs was quite confident as to obtaining consent of Council, but it appears there is a strong feeling against his policy regarding Japanese negotiations, and he thinks that the opposition last night was largely directed against him personally and was not in reality concerned with the merits of the case.

No. 507.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 161.)

Foreign Office, August 26, 1907.

D. 9.30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 168 (of Aug[ust] 25).⁽¹⁾

We are much disappointed at this unexpected difficulty. I have discussed it carefully with S[ecretary] of S[tate] for India: we feel that we have gone to utmost limit of concession in agreeing to formula of Article V. We cannot lose sight of the prejudicial effect which proposed Russian alterations of Convention would have upon the mind of the Amir and consequently upon our position and influence with him.

Moreover public opinion here will be exceedingly critical of concessions with regard to Afghanistan, even on what may appear to be small points. With every desire therefore to meet Russian views, we cannot go further than the alternatives suggested in your [telegram] No. 168 if any change is to be made in the text we entirely approve your reply.

As to commercial clause the words as they now stand would cover any proved case of differential duties, but to add words proposed might imply an obligation upon us to force Amir to draw up a complete tariff, which would be undesirable and very difficult.

I hope Russian Government will bear in mind that larger issues are indirectly at stake even than those directly involved in these agreements, for it has throughout been our expectation and belief that an agreement as regards Asia worked in a friendly manner would so influence the disposition of this country towards Russia as to make friendly relations possible on questions which may arise elsewhere in the future. Without such an Agreement this expectation must be disappointed.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 508.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 434.)

St. Petersburg, D. August 26, 1907.

Sir,

R. September 3, 1907.

I think that I should place on record the various phases through which the negotiations in regard to the Draft Convention concerning Afghanistan have passed during the last few days.

On the 22nd instant I had the honour to receive some telegrams from you which communicated certain proposals as to the rearrangement and redrafting of some of the Articles in the Draft Convention.⁽¹⁾ You proposed in the first place to suppress Article 2 entirely, but to insert the middle sentence, concerning the

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 561-2, Nos. 501-3.]

undertaking on the part of Great Britain to exercise her influence in Afghanistan in a pacific sense, in Article I which Article would then cover all the pledges mutually given by both Governments. You further authorized me to propose that the additional Article or Article 5 should be drafted as follows:—"If any change occurs in the political status of Afghanistan the two Governments will enter into a friendly interchange of views on the subject." You also desired that in the Article relating to the relations of frontier officials, the words "on the frontier or in the frontier provinces," should be inserted after "specially designated for the purpose."

I at once called on Monsieur Isvolsky and submitted the above mentioned proposals. He told me that his first impressions were favourable, but that he must examine them and also consult with the Emperor, whom he was to see that evening, before he could give me a reply. He begged me not to telegraph to you till he had seen His Majesty and I acquiesced in his wish. I may add that I could see that the proposals caused Monsieur Isvolsky very evident pleasure.

Late that night, after he had returned from the Emperor he wrote me a private letter to say that he was very happy to tell me that personally he was now ready to recommend to his colleagues to accept the proposals which I had made to him: but that he could not give me a definitive and official reply till after Saturday the 24th instant. I telegraphed to you on the morning of the 23rd to that effect.⁽²⁾ I saw him on the afternoon of Friday the 23rd instant and he appeared quite sanguine as to the result, and we discussed the form in which the Convention and Agreements should be drawn up, and I subsequently despatched my Telegram No. 163 as to these points.⁽³⁾ The next morning the 24th instant I received your telegram requesting that all the French texts should be sent to you so that you should have time to examine before the agreements were signed.⁽⁴⁾ I acquainted Monsieur Isvolsky with this request, and he kindly suggested that myself and M. O'Beirne should come to the Ministry that afternoon when he would have all the French texts ready for collation, and he said he would be happy to send a special Messenger with them to London the same evening. Mr. O'Beirne and myself attended at the Ministry as had been arranged: and the texts were carefully compared by Monsieur Isvolsky, the Head of the First Department, Mr. O'Beirne and myself, and found to be in accordance with the proposals which I had made to him. I read to him the Despatch⁽⁵⁾ which should cover the texts and he concurred with its terms: and I then handed to him the packet for transmission to you.

M. Isvolsky throughout these recent interviews showed no anxiety as to the results of the Council of Ministers which was to be held the evening of the 24th instant; in fact his only anxiety was whether I should receive your approval of the texts in time to permit of the Convention being prepared for signature on the 31st instant. I therefore had no doubt in my mind that, beyond perhaps some drafting amendments, the Council of Ministers would raise no difficulties: and I am sure that no hesitations crossed the mind of Monsieur Isvolsky. This is not only my own impression but also that of Mr. O'Beirne who was present. I asked Monsieur Isvolsky to be good enough to let me know the results of the Cabinet Council, so that I might inform you, if possible before the texts reached you, that the Russian Government had finally and definitely approved the Agreements.

Very early on Sunday morning the 25th instant I received a Note from Monsieur Isvolsky asking me to call at the Ministry and on my arriving there I found His Excellency much perturbed. He told me that the Council had lasted till 2 A.M. and that he had met with very strong opposition from several members

(2) [*v. supra*, 563-4, No. 505.]

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 301-2, No. 283.]

(4) [Tel. No. 155 to Sir A. Nicolson of August 23. It contained merely the request for the French texts.]

(5) [*v. supra*, p. 502, No. 456.]

of the Cabinet. He had been reproached for having yielded too much, and especially for having agreed to the suppression of Article 2. He argued, he said, till he was hoarse, pointing out that Article 1 gave all necessary assurances and guarantees, and that Article 5 afforded an opportunity to Russia of discussing matters with us. I had some doubts whether Monsieur Isvolsky clearly explained to the Council all the circumstances attending the various proposals and counter-proposals which have circled round Article 2: not of course from any desire to give otherwise than a perfectly accurate history of the question, but because there is some very natural confusion in his mind on the subject. In any case the majority of the Council required that the whole first sentence of Article 2 should be reinserted either as a separate Article or interpolated into Article 1.

I told Monsieur Isvolsky that if the first sentence of Article 2 were reinserted my Government would then suppress Article 5 or would only consent to the retention of Article 5 on the condition that the whole of Article 2 in its pristine form were restored. To this Monsieur Isvolsky said that he was sure he would not be able to secure the unanimous consent of the Cabinet. I need not report the arguments which I employed with Monsieur Isvolsky, because you can readily gather their tenour, and also because there was really no necessity to drive arguments home to His Excellency who had already agreed to the texts which are now on their way to you. It would, I doubt not, be of more interest to report what Monsieur Isvolsky related to me as to the steps which he had taken since the 22nd instant.

On the evening of the 22nd he proceeded to Peterhof and submitted to the Emperor the Conventions as they had been agreed upon between him and myself, and which are those which will reach you to-morrow. His Majesty said that he would assent to them if the Council of Ministers unanimously agreed to them. His Excellency on his return to St. Petersburg wrote me the note of which I have previously made mention, and he was evidently of opinion that the Council would make no difficulties. He probably considered that should any opposition arise, he would have no great difficulty in overcoming it as he was fortified with the Emperor's conditional assent. He was, however, he told me, surprised by the tenacity of the opposition which encountered him in the Cabinet. This opposition was in reality largely promoted, he considered, by a feeling against his foreign policy in general, as a portion of the press has of late been sharply criticizing his conduct of the Japanese negotiations, and his opponents in the Cabinet were apparently determined that he should not be too conciliatory in those he was now conducting with His Majesty's Government. Be the motives of his opponents what they may, the result was that, a vote being taken, three, himself, Monsieur Stolypin, and one military member (I do not know whether the Minister of War or the Chief of the General Staff) voted for the Convention as arranged with us, and the remaining members voted for the reinsertion of the first portion of the former Article 2.

I enquired of Monsieur Isvolsky what was to be the next step. He urged me to recommend to you that the wishes of the majority should be met. I told him that it was really unnecessary for me to do more than report the present unfortunate situation. In 48 hours you would be in possession of the full French texts: and would be in a position to decide on the course to be followed. What I wished to know was what would be the procedure here, if His Majesty's Government maintained the attitude which I had already indicated to him.

Monsieur Isvolsky said that if His Majesty's Government declined to meet the wishes of the majority of the Cabinet in the way they desired, and if, as he felt confident, the majority maintained their point of view, he would have to wait upon the Emperor, and lay before His Majesty the divergence of opinion which had arisen, and take His Majesty's pleasure. If the Emperor, as was possible, preferred to accept his opinion as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and authorized him to sign the texts as already drawn up, the Convention would then be concluded in

the term determined upon between us. But the majority he was sure would be dissatisfied; the smooth execution of the Convention would be rendered difficult, and the attacks in the Press would be redoubled. If, on the other hand, the opinion of the majority prevailed with the Emperor, it would then be not only a question as to his portfolio but the Conventions would be lost. While if His Majesty's Government could see their way to agreeing to the proposed amendment and the reinsertion of the whole of the first sentence of Article 2, from the words "The British Government having recorded" to the words "above-mentioned Treaty" the difficulty would be completely solved.

I told His Excellency that I would report all his observations faithfully to you.

There was one other point, he said, as to which the Cabinet was not satisfied. In the Article concerning commercial matters, there were doubts whether "equality of treatment" covered equality of customs duties; and it was desired that I should address an explanatory note to him, to be published with the Convention, in the terms of which I beg leave to transmit a transcript. I told him that this objection, he would pardon me for saying so, was ridiculous. I could not conceive a broader or clearer expression than "equality of treatment," and it seemed quite superfluous for me to address to him any explanatory note on the subject. Monsieur Isvolsky said that he quite agreed with me, but to satisfy the Cabinet he begged me to refer the matter to my Government. I said that, of course, at his request I would refer anything to my Government, though I still could not understand what doubts could possibly exist on the point. I then took leave of His Excellency, promising to inform him as soon as I received a reply from you.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 508.

Proposed Explanatory Note respecting the Draft Convention concerning Afghanistan.

Je suis autorisé par mon Gouvernement à préciser que le terme "égalité de traitement pour ce qui concerne le commerce" implique l'égalité de tous les droits commerciaux, les droits de douane y compris.

No. 509.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 27, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 169.)

D. 8 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Afghan draft Convention.

I communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs today Memorandum embodying the substance of your telegram No. 161 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

He expressed disappointment that His Majesty's Government had not been able to accept proposal which he had made on 25th August.⁽²⁾ and, after the usual arguments, he inquired whether I would be prepared to accept, without further reference to my Government, one of the alternatives, viz. :—

1. Either to maintain Article II in its entirety as recorded in original British counter-project; or
2. Delete final sentence, but then suppress the additional Article V.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 565, No. 507.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 564–5, No. 506, and pp. 566–7, No. 508.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 559, No. 497.]

I said that I felt authorized to do so, provided, of course, that all the other Agreements, &c., were approved by my Government and accepted by Russian Government. I rather anticipate that this will be result. I told him that I felt sure that texts we had already agreed upon offered most satisfactory solution. We had long argument, to my surprise, as to the Commercial Articles. I told him that statement made in my Memorandum by authority of my Government that the Articles covered any proved case of differential duties ought to satisfy Ministry of Commerce, and I considered that it had same force as a note. He said that they feared that one duty might be charged on cottons, for instance, coming over the Russian frontier, and a lower duty on cottons of the same category coming over Indian frontier.

I said that this would be clearly inequality of treatment, and as Convention would have to receive Ameer's consent, we should have good grounds, in case such inequalities did arise, to make representations to him.

He will now have another Council, and let me know result.

As he will probably wish to sign as soon as possible, I have no doubt that I shall receive as soon as convenient your approval of French texts, which should have reached you this morning.

Please let me know which you would prefer in French translation of first sentence of Article II, "déclaré" or "consigné" for the word "recorded."

No. 510.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/320.

(No. 438.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 28, 1907.

R. September 3, 1907.

On receipt of your Telegram No. 161 of the 26th instant,⁽¹⁾ conveying to me the views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the latest proposal of the Russian Government and on which I reported in my Despatch No. 434 of the 26th instant,⁽²⁾ I called on Monsieur Isvolsky and read to him the *Aide-mémoire* of which I have the honour to enclose a copy. His Excellency, on my concluding, remarked that it was "fin de non recevoir." I told him that I by no means agreed with him, and pointed out that His Majesty's Government offered to the Russian Government two alternatives, though to my mind it would be preferable if he were able to induce his colleagues in the Cabinet to accept the texts of the Convention in the form on which we had both agreed, and which I had forwarded to you by the special messenger on Saturday. His Excellency asked me if I felt authorized to accept either alternative without further reference to my Government, and I replied in the affirmative. After going over some of the old arguments in regard to Article 2 and its chequered life, His Excellency observed to me that the portion of the *Aide Mémoire* with which he cordially agreed was the concluding paragraph: and he must again repeat that it was precisely in order to render the Conventions thoroughly acceptable to his Government, and thereby ensure their smooth execution, that he had urged on His Majesty's Government to concede the requests of the Russian Cabinet. However he must now do his best to secure the consent of his colleagues to one of the alternatives which I had submitted.

He much regretted that His Majesty's Government had not seen their way to authorize me to address him the explanatory note in regard to the interpretation of the phrase "Equality of treatment" in the Article concerning commercial relations, as he would then be able to show his colleagues that he had not failed all along the line.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 565, No. 507.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 565-8, No. 508.]

I explained to His Excellency, after considerable discussion, that he would see in the *Aide-Mémoire* that I had distinctly mentioned, not as my own opinion, but as an authorized statement on behalf of my Government, that the wording of the article clearly covered any proved case of differential duties: that when the Convention came into force the Ameer would have already given his consent to its terms, and that, therefore the Russian Government could, quite justly, in the event of differential duties being established, call upon us to represent the matter to the Ameer who would doubtless give it his serious consideration. The *Aide-Mémoire* was quite as important as a Note would be.

This morning I called on M. Isvolsky to communicate to him the amendments which His Majesty's Government desired to see introduced into the general preamble and in the ratifying article. I found him in much better spirits: and he told me his employés were already engaged in preparing the documents for signature: that a Council was to be held this afternoon when he fully expected that a final decision would be taken, and that the signature could then take place on Saturday next the 31st instant. I said I was quite prepared to fulfil my part on Saturday.

As to the amendments in the general preamble he observed that "Them" or "Eux" must refer to the Sovereigns and that it would be quite unusual to assume that any misunderstandings could possibly arise between the two Sovereigns. He far preferred the original wording, and after some discussion and an unsuccessful endeavour to find more suitable formulas, I consented to accept the wording as it stood, as I considered you would not wish me to insist on a drafting amendment which might delay matters. I said that "Etats" sounded a little oddly in English if translated "States," but perhaps the word "Dominions" would be a suitable rendering.

He agreed to amend the ratifying Article by stating, "la présente Convention sera ratifiée."

He again came back to the Article regarding commerce; and said that the Minister of Commerce was still not satisfied, and that he thought an unsigned *Aide-mémoire* was hardly a very strong staff to lean upon. I may mention that, treating it as an academical question, I had enquired of my French colleague, who is an expert in such matters, whether "égalité de traitement pour ce qui concerne le commerce" would not clearly cover equality of customs duties, or rather would exclude differential duties being imposed on the same articles passing over different frontiers. He said he did not think that the phraseology I had mentioned need necessarily do so. Equality of treatment as regards commerce might refer to permits, consignments of stores and various other similar matters: but it would be more correct and explicit to mention in some form or another customs duties. The addition of the words "dans toutes les matières" would be more explicit, or the addition of some words implying that customs duties were included.

To continue. Monsieur Isvolsky asked whether I could not write him a Note, not for publication or to be annexed to the Convention, but simply to show the Minister of Commerce, stating that His Majesty's Government recognized that they interpreted the Article as covering differential duties. I should be rendering him a great service if I could do so. I told His Excellency that I would consult you on the subject, but in any case I could not go further than what I had stated in the *Aide-mémoire*.

If you see no objection it might be well to meet Monsieur Isvolsky's wishes in this respect.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 510.

Aide-mémoire.

His Majesty's Embassy communicated to His Majesty's Government the proposal of the Imperial Russian Government that the following should be inserted in the

Draft Convention concerning Afghanistan, either as a separate Article or interpolated in Article I.

“ Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ayant déclaré dans le Traité signé à Kabul le 21 mars 1905 qu'il reconnaît l'arrangement et les engagements conclus avec le défunt Emir Abdur Rahman et qu'il n'a aucune intention à s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure du territoire Afghan. la Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas annexer ou occuper, contrairement au dit Traité, une partie quelconque de l'Afghanistan, ni à s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure de ce pays, sous réserve que l'Emir remplira les engagements déjà contractés par lui à l'égard du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique en vertu du Traité susmentionné.”

His Majesty's Government are much disappointed that an unexpected difficulty has arisen when the negotiations were apparently on the eve of being happily concluded. His Majesty's Government considered that they had gone to the utmost limit of concession in agreeing to the formula of Article 5, and they must keep carefully in view the effect which the terms of the Convention will have upon the mind of the Ameer and consequently upon their position and influence with him. Moreover public opinion in Great Britain and in India will be exceedingly critical of concessions with regard to Afghanistan, even on what may appear to be small points.

His Majesty's Government have every desire to meet the views of the Imperial Russian Government, but it will be impossible for them to go further than one of the two following alternatives. 1. To maintain Article 2 in its entirety as communicated to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on June 4/17 1907 in the British counterproject including the engagement on the part of the Imperial Russian Government as set forth in the final sentence of that Article.⁽³⁾ Or 2, to omit the above-mentioned final sentence, but in that case to suppress also the additional Article 5 as to an exchange of views between the two Governments in case of a change occurring in the political status of Afghanistan.⁽⁴⁾

As to the Article concerning commerce, it is perfectly clear that the words as they now stand would cover any proved case of differential duties. His Majesty's Government are unable to accept the proposed explanatory note not only because it is superfluous, but also because it might imply an obligation on the part of Great Britain to bring pressure to bear on the Ameer to draw up a complete Tariff.

His Majesty's Government sincerely trust that the Imperial Russian Government will appreciate that larger issues are indirectly at stake than those directly involved in these Agreements. for it has throughout been the expectation and the belief of His Majesty's Government that an agreement as to their respective interests in Asia, if executed in a friendly manner, would so influence the disposition of public opinion in Great Britain as to make friendly relations possible on questions which may arise elsewhere in the future. Without such an agreement this expectation must be disappointed.

St. Petersburg, August 14/27, 1907.

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 542-3, No. 483, column 2.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 559, No. 497.]

No. 511.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/320.

(No. 440.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. August 29, 1907.**R. September 3, 1907.*

I received a private Note from Monsieur Isvolsky last night to say that the Council of Ministers had, after a long discussion, decided to accept what he termed "votre troisième alternative" concerning Afghanistan. To make quite sure that there should be no misunderstanding, I wrote to His Excellency and asked if by the "third alternative" he referred to that which suppressed the final sentence of Article 2, *i.e.*, the sentence by which Russia engaged not to annex &c. and which at the same time also suppressed the additional Article 5 by which we agreed to enter into an exchange of views if any change occurred in the political status of Afghanistan. I received a reply to-day that I had correctly interpreted his letter.

I venture to think that it is of advantage that the additional Article has disappeared, and I am rather surprised that the Council of Ministers agreed to its excision. As Monsieur Isvolsky remarked to me this morning, the Russian Government have in fact accepted the proposals which I made immediately after my return from London.

I explained to His Excellency that as soon as the Convention was signed the Government of India would communicate its purport to the Ameer of Afghanistan, and it was desirable that this communication should reach the hands of the Ameer before the Convention was published: as it would be most unfortunate were the Ameer to receive the first news of the Convention, and possibly in a distorted form, from any other source than the Government of India. His Excellency quite agreed with these views, and said that he must come to some arrangement with me as to the mode and date of the publication of the Convention. I said we might discuss that question a little later, and of course I would have to solicit your views and wishes on the matter.

His Excellency had on the previous night begged me to acquaint him as early as possible with the reply which I might receive from you in respect to my writing a Note with regard to the interpretation and scope of the phrase "equality of treatment" in Article 4. I gave him this morning a Note, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy, and he was much gratified at receiving it. He perfectly understood that it was not for publication, but solely for his information and for the purpose of reassuring the Minister of Commerce. I told him that we were still of opinion that the terms of Article 4 needed no elucidation, but we desired to meet his wishes.

The negotiations are now concluded, and M. Isvolsky today submits to the Emperor the final texts of the Convention for His Majesty's approval, and the signatures will be affixed on Saturday next the 31st instant.

I think that all is in order, and in the form which you desired; and the next stage will be the manner in which the several agreements will be executed. This, I submit, is of great importance: and it is most earnestly to be desired that the local officials of both countries will lend their cordial cooperation in the execution of an instrument, which should be productive of immeasurable benefits to the friendly relations of both countries, and assist greatly towards the preservation of peace in Central Asia.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 511.

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski.

Monsieur le Ministre,

St. Petersburg, August 16/29, 1907.

Referring to our conversation of yesterday, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that I am authorized to state that the words in Article 4 of the

Convention concerning Afghanistan as to "égalité de traitement pour ce qui concerne le commerce" would, in the opinion of my Government, cover any proved case of differential customs duties.

I avail, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 512.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, August 29, 1907.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 175.)

D. 2 P.M.

R. 4 P.M.

Anglo-Russian Convention.

Afghanistan. Council of Ministers has finally decided to accept Deletion of the final sentence in Article II and the suppression of addition to Article V. Convention will therefore consist of

Article I. Engagement of Great Britain not to change political status and engagements of Russia as to country being outside her sphere etc.

Article II. The old Article II with the exception of final sentence.

Article III. Frontier relations.

Article IV. Trade relations.

Article V. Consent of Ameer; and nothing more.⁽¹⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] quite agrees to giving time to government of India to communicate with Ameer.

I will telegraph later as to what he suggests should be told press. We should have to acknowledge fact of signature but nothing more for the moment. His Excellency quite agrees to early date for ratification and he will speak to me later on that point.

I gave him a note not for publication but for his information stating the view of His Majesty's government as to the Article covering Trade. He was very grateful. . . .⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [For the final text of the Treaty see Table on pp. 541-4.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this telegram refers to the exchange of telegraph lines in Persia, *v. supra*, p. 501, No. 454.]

No. 513.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/320.

Tel. (No. 176.)

Foreign Office, August 31, 1907, 2.10 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 177.⁽¹⁾

We have telegraphed to the Gov[ernmen]t of India to ask how much time they require for communicating the Agreement to the Amir.

It is essential that publication shall not take place before he receives the Text, but it will not be necessary to await his consent.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. Tel. No. 177 from Sir A. Nicolson of August 30 referred to M. Isvolski's desire that, if the official publication of the Convention must await the Amir's consent, an unofficial statement giving the outlines should be published shortly, as he felt the signature of the Convention could not be concealed. Sir A. Nicolson wished the official publication to be the first statement on the Convention.]

We should prefer that no announcement at all beyond a verbal reply to enquiries, to the effect that the Convention has been signed should be made until we hear that the Amir has received the Text, but in any case you should urge M. Isvolsky not to allow any communication of the outlines of the Agreement—even by means of an indiscretion to be made pending its receipt by the Amir.

If he insists on the announcement for Sunday, the terms are unobjectionable.⁽²⁾

(²) [The instruction to the Viceroy to have the agreement verbally explained to the Amir was sent on September 6. Lord Morley's private letter of 7th, *v. infra*, p. 587, No. 526, stated that it would take sixteen days to reach him, adding "I hope he will not be troublesome, but he may be *slow*." In consequence publication was delayed till the 24th, in spite of Russian protests, and ultimately made on the 26th.]

No. 514.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 17770/3835/08/38.

(No. 235.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. May 19, 1908.

R. May 25, 1908.

The recent events on the frontier of India and Afghanistan have of course been followed in this country with great interest, and there has been some inclination, not confined to the press or the general public, to take an unnecessarily pessimistic view of them.⁽¹⁾ M. Isvolsky referred seriously to the matter when I saw him at his last official reception, saying that the news sounded alarming, and remarking that the fact of the Ameer not having yet given his assent to the Anglo-Russian Convention regarding Afghanistan made the situation embarrassing.

I need not trouble you by recapitulating the views of the St. Petersburg newspapers as to the causes of the present outbreak, behind which most of them, needless to say, see the wicked machinations of Germany, as indeed, the Russian press does nowadays on every possible occasion. What is of more interest is that these journals, while in many cases they anticipate that England will find herself at war with Afghanistan or at any rate engaged in serious military operations, show no trace either of suspicion as to Great Britain's eventual aims or policy in Afghanistan, or of a desire that Russia should take advantage of the situation to further her own ends. On the contrary, most of the writers emphasize the view that the Agreement arrived at between the two countries enables England to deal with the Afghan difficulty without any misgivings as regards Russia. The "Bourse Gazette" says that both Government and people in England can rest fully assured that Russia will carry out religiously the "obligations resting on her under the Agreement." The "Retch" says that it is no longer possible now for Afghanistan to play off Russia against England. The "Novoe Vremya" observes that England, like Russia, must firmly establish peace and security on her borders. Nowhere have I seen it suggested that Russia's attitude might be affected by the fact that the Ameer has not consented to the Afghan clauses of the Convention.

When one thinks of the alarm, suspicion, and hostility that would, in the absence of an Agreement between the two countries, have been aroused in Russia by the prospect of British military operations in Afghanistan, one cannot but recognise in the attitude of the press on the present occasion a gratifying result yielded by the recent Convention.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

(¹) [Frontier raids by the Zakka Khels in January 1908 led to the despatch of a punitive expedition in February. Order was quickly restored; but a second expedition was despatched in May to suppress a rising of the Mohmands of a more serious character.]

MINUTE.

The " Bourse Gazette " and " Novoe Vremya " used to be the most implacable enemies of England.

C. H.

No. 515.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 17778/3835/08/38.

(No. 248.)

St. Petersburg, D. May 21, 1908.

Sir,

R. May 25, 1908.

With reference to my despatch No. 235 of the 19th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to state that M. Iswolsky to-day again spoke to me about events in Afghanistan. He said he could assure me that neither in official nor military circles in Russia did there exist the faintest suspicion as regards British policy in Afghanistan, nor had any suggestion been put forward that Russia should take advantage of the fact that the Ameer had not consented to the recent Convention respecting his dominions. He need not say that Russia meant absolutely to observe the spirit of the Convention.

At the same time His Excellency said that the Russian Government entertained the hope that Great Britain would not find it necessary to take such action in Afghanistan as would alter the *status quo* and oblige the Imperial Government to reopen the question.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BIERNE.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 516.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

Lightwater, Bagshot,

July 19, 1908.

Many thanks for your letter and its enclosure. The prospect of obtaining the consent of the Ameer does not seem to be very bright: and if the procedure suggested by the Viceroy should lead to no satisfactory results, we should have to face a regrettable situation. The convention concerning Afghanistan would remain a dead letter: and although this would not necessarily lead to the abrogation or suspension of the Persian and Thibetan agreements, the efficacy of these latter instruments would be greatly weakened and impaired. The Afghan Convention forms part of a whole, and it is clear that its non execution would leave a mutilated portion. The spirit and intentions of the whole arrangement would undergo a change.

Moreover we should have to publicly admit that although we decline to permit Russia to have any direct relations with the Ameer, we are ourselves incapable of exercising any effective influence over that potentate in matters of external policy affecting his country. Russia would, in that case, have some justification in asserting that we were useless as intermediaries, and that it would be more to her

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

advantage to treat direct with the Ameer should the occasion for so doing ever arise. If the Afghan Convention has to go by the board, and if the Ameer were allowed to veto an arrangement to which the Sovereigns and Gov[ernmen]ts of Russia and England had subscribed and had formally ratified, I should imagine that our prestige would suffer seriously throughout the Middle and Far East. Furthermore the opponents, both in and out of Russia, to an understanding between the two countries would be greatly encouraged, and I do not consider that the unfortunate effects ensuing from our failure to secure the consent of the Ameer would be limited solely to the points at issue. The consequences would be more serious, and would flow over a wide field.

I see that the Viceroy is of opinion that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t foresaw the possibility of a disagreement with the Ameer, and he apparently considers that Art[icle]s 3 and 4 were inserted with the object of provoking such a disagreement. I am sure that the view is erroneous. The article as to commerce etc was inserted at the express desire of the Russian Min[ister] of Commerce, who was anxious that the trade of Russia should have equal opportunities with that of India. There were no hidden political aims in the demand. As to relations between the frontier officials, it was considered on both sides that the existing irregular and undefined intercourse should be, as far as possible, placed on a recognized and definite footing, and carried on through specially selected agents. The Russian Gov[ernmen]t, so far as my observation went, would have been perfectly willing to accept the agreement without reference to the Ameer, if we had been in a position to guarantee that all its provisions would be faithfully and fully executed, and if we had been able to answer for its loyal observance by the Ameer. I doubt if the Russian Gov[ernmen]t anticipated that we should fail in obtaining the consent of the latter.

There is one more consideration, which to my mind is of great importance. Essential as a friendly Afghanistan may be to our position in India, equally essential, I submit, is a friendly Russia to our general international position, both as regards the actual situation, and also in respect to that in the not distant future. If we wish, and I presume that we do wish, in the interest of peace, to avert the possibility of any Power assuming a position from which she could dictate to others, a close understanding with France and Russia is, I submit, an object for the attainment of which every effort should be made. We have secured an undertaking with France. That with Russia is in its very early infancy, and will require, for reasons which I need not explain, careful nurture and treatment. Any serious check to this infant growth may kill it before it has advanced in years, and its disappearance would doubtless eventually react on our relations with France.⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

(2) [The closing sentences of this letter refer to personal matters.]

No. 517.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 38886/3885/08/38.

(No. 500.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 3, 1908.

R. November 9, 1908.

I observed to the Emperor to-day that both you and Lord Morley had been especially gratified with the willingness of M. Iswolsky to act upon the assumption that the Convention concerning Afghanistan was in force, although the consent of the Ameer had not yet been received. This had been considered a most satisfactory assurance, not only as a sign of the good intentions of the Russian Government, but also as enabling us to deal in a friendly spirit with any incidents which might arise. A reply had been received from the Ameer regarding the Convention, and,

though the document was a very lengthy and rambling one, it afforded a basis for further discussion. These discussions would be continued, though I feared that they would take some time, as Afghans, like other semi-civilized Orientals, were slow in their procedure and singularly difficult to convince.

The Emperor said that he quite understood the position, and he was glad to have noticed that the Jamshedi incident had not caused any difficulties between the two Governments.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

[ED. NOTE.—The consent of the Amir to the Convention was never obtained, though it was at one time considered essential, *cp. supra*, p. 555, No. 492, *encl.*, and *infra*, p. 614, No. 549. The British and Russian Governments finally arranged that the Agreement should come into force without his consent being necessary.]

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RECEPTION OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION.

No. 518.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 2, 1907.

F.O. 371/372.

Tel. (No. 180.)

D. 8 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Persian Arrangement.

Following is text of the communication which, subject to your approval and any amendments you may desire, Russian Government suggested that two Representatives should address to Persian Government:—

“The Governments of Russia and of Great Britain, desiring to avoid any cause of conflict between their respective interests in certain regions of Persia contiguous with or in the neighbourhood of Russian frontier, on the one hand, and of frontiers of Afghanistan and of Beluchistan on the other, have signed a friendly Arrangement on the subject.

“In that Agreement the two Governments mutually agree to the strict integrity and independence of Persia, and testify that they sincerely desire the pacific (? development) of that country as well as the permanent establishment of equal advantages for the commerce and industry of all other nations. Each of the two States further engages not to seek concessions of any nature whatsoever in the regions adjoining or in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of the other. In order to prevent misunderstandings in the future, and to avoid creating an order of things which might place the Persian Government in an embarrassing situation in any respect whatever, the above-mentioned regions are clearly defined in the Arrangement. In mentioning the revenues which are affected to the loans concluded by Persian Government with the Discount and Loan Bank and with Imperial Bank of Persia, the Russian and British Governments recognize that these revenues will be in the future affected to the same purpose as in the past. And the two Governments equally engage, in the case of irregularities in the amortization or in the payment of interest of above-mentioned loans, to enter on a friendly exchange of views in order to determine by common agreement the measures of control which it would be necessary to take, and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles of that Arrangement.

“In signing that Arrangement, the two States have not for a moment lost sight of the fundamental principle of the absolute respect of the integrity and the independence of Persia. The Arrangement has no other object than that of avoiding any cause of misunderstanding between the Contracting Parties on the ground of Persian affairs. The Government of the Shah will convince itself that the agreement arrived at between Russia and Great Britain can but contribute in the most efficacious manner to the security, the prosperity, and the ulterior development of Persia.”

Instructions are added as follows:—

“Please concert with your British colleague, who will be furnished by his Government with similar instructions as to making an identic official communication to the Persian Government in the terms of present telegram.”

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs asked when the communication should be made. I said that I presumed immediately the two Governments had agreed upon terms.

No. 519.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 2, 1907.

F.O. 371/325.

D. 8.1 P.M.

Tel. (No. 181.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs before leaving suggested that besides communication to Persia, some notification should be jointly made at Peking as to Thibet Arrangement. In regard to other Powers, he proposed that each Government should be at liberty to select those to whom it would wish to make a communication, confidentially, of Convention before publication.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs asked whether anything should be said at Constantinople. It was not custom of Russian Government to make such communications to the Porte, but perhaps in this case it might be well to do so.

Please give me your views.

MINUTES.

I cannot see any necessity for communicating the Convention before publication to the Porte which is in no way affected by it.

I suppose we should communicate it to the Japanese Gov[ernmen]t and French Gov[ernmen]t.

W. E.

Sept. 3.

Sir F. Campbell.

What are your views as to making a communication to the Chinese G[overnmen]t?

L. M.

I see no real necessity for it; but on the other hand there can be no harm in it, as we have decided to work with China or through China in regard to Tibet; and therefore recognize her suzerainty. As the Russians appear to wish to make such a communication we can certainly agree. We have already jointly with the Russians enquired at Peking as to the boundaries of Tibet, and we are to approach the Chinese Gov[ernment] formally in regard to prohibition of scientific missions into Tibet. This might be done at same time.

F. A. C.

I think that the paramount consideration is secrecy at present—if texts are communicated it is sure to come out and then we should have to publish.

On the other hand, we have already told Geoffray something and we should certainly inform the Japanese of the gist of the agreements as soon as maybe.

If the Russian G[overnmen]t agree to the above (supposing you approve) we might then draw up a telegram from MacDonald and instruct Bertie to make a verbal comm[unicatio]n to M. Clemenceau.

L. M.

The Japanese Ambassador communicated to us the text of the Japanese agreement with Russia. He should be told confidentially the substance of ours; he practically knows it already from conversation with me; he might also be told that the whole will be published very soon.

E. G.

[ED. NOTE.—Tel. No. 30 of September 5 to Sir Claude MacDonald directed him to explain the Agreement verbally to Japan. A telegram No. 100 of September 6 to Sir F. Bertie directed that explanations should be given to France, and a similar one was sent for the information of the Amir of Afghanistan. For the latter's subsequent attitude, v. ch. XXVII, pp. 574-7, and Ed. note.]

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Kimbolton, September 4, 1907.

I have received this morning three letters from you for which I thank you greatly, especially for the personal line which you wrote.

I agree with you in thinking the conclusion of this Russian Convention a most important and far-reaching business which will, I believe, be productive of the most beneficial results to us in the future. It has been the greatest pleasure to me to cooperate with such an old friend as you in a matter of which the realisation has been my dream for the last four years. I have been so imbued with the importance of an agreement with Russia that it was one of the reasons which induced me to give up the Embassy at St. P[etersburg] since I felt that I could do more by impressing my views on people at home, and I promised both Lamsdorff and the Emperor that I would do my level best to bring it about. It seems to me hardly credible that it is now done, but it is a great joy to think of it as being done. We have now to see that it is carried out and I am confident that in this Isvolsky will show as much loyalty as he has shown during the negotiations.

I received this morning a letter from the King in which there was the following passage which I am delighted to send on to you:—

“I was delighted to get Grey’s and Nicolson’s cypher telegrams last night, telling me that the Anglo-Russian Convention had been signed at St. Petersburg.

It must be a great relief to your and Grey’s minds, and Nicolson deserves the *greatest* praise for having carried out these most difficult negotiations with such skill and perseverance. When you write to him please tell him how deeply I feel it. These last negotiations and the part he played last year at Algeciras place him in the front rank of our Diplomatsists.”

I have replied to him this morning saying that the F[oreign] O[ffice] cordially agree with his appreciation of your services. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The closing sentences of the letter are of no importance.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 457.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 4, 1907.

R. September 16, 1907.

The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Monsieur Goubastoff, gave me the day before yesterday a Draft of the communication which the two Governments might make to the Persian Government explanatory of the agreement concerning Persia. I had the honour to telegraph the full text in my Telegram No. 180 of the 2nd instant,⁽¹⁾ and I beg leave to transmit copy of the document. It told Monsieur Goubastoff that as soon as I received your views I would let him know their tenour without delay, so that the Representatives at Tehran might receive the necessary instructions. It was, I added, of great importance that nothing should appear in the public press, by indiscretion, intentional or unintentional, until the Persian Government had received the communication, and above all before the Ameer had received from the Govern-

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 578–9, No. 518.]

ment of India the substance of the Afghan Convention. This latter condition was most essential.

His Excellency said that he had understood from Monsieur Isvolsky that the "Novoe Vremya" might receive an outline of the Convention in 8 or 10 days time. I begged that no date should be fixed until I knew when the communication from the Government of India would reach the Ameer. My Government, I said, had telegraphed to ascertain the time which it took for a communication to reach the Ameer, and as I believed the latter was on a tour, this time might have to be extended.

I am, nevertheless, doubtful if I shall succeed in securing that secrecy will be maintained for more than a few days. The Ministry is anxious to propitiate the "Novoe Vremya," a widely read journal, and which of late has been attacking with some asperity the methods of Russian diplomacy. It is for this reason that I trust very shortly to receive your views as to the communication to be made to the Persian Government and also informed as to the date approximately when the Ameer will be in possession of official information in regard to the Convention.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 521.

Proposed Joint Communication to be made to Persian Government by British and Russian Governments.

Les Gouvernements de Russie et de la Grande Bretagne, désireux d'éviter tout motif de conflit entre leurs intérêts respectifs dans certaines régions de la Perse, contiguës ou voisines à la frontière russe d'une part et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Beloudjistan de l'autre, viennent de signer un arrangement amical à ce sujet.

Dans cet accord les deux Gouvernements s'engagent mutuellement à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse et témoignent qu'ils désirent sincèrement le développement pacifique de ce pays, aussi bien que l'établissement permanent d'avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les autres nations. Chacun des deux Etats s'engage en outre à ne pas rechercher de concessions de quelque nature que ce soit dans les régions attenantes ou voisines aux frontières de l'autre; afin de prévenir des malentendus à l'avenir et pour éviter de créer un ordre de choses qui pourrait mettre le Gouvernement Persan dans une situation embarrassante sous un rapport quelconque, les régions susmentionnées sont nettement définies dans l'arrangement. Mentionnant les revenus qui sont affectés au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement Persan à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse et à la Banque Impériale de Perse, les Gouvernements Russe et Anglais reconnaissent que ces revenus seront affectés à l'avenir au même but que par le passé. Les deux Gouvernements s'engagent également, pour le cas d'irrégularités dans l'amortissement ou le paiement des % des emprunts susmentionnés, d'entrer dans un échange de vues amical afin de déterminer d'un commun accord les mesures de contrôle qu'il serait nécessaire de prendre et d'éviter toute ingérence qui ne serait pas conforme aux principes de cet arrangement.

En signant cet arrangement, les deux Etats n'ont pas perdu de vue pour un seul instant le principe fondamental du respect absolu de l'intégrité et de l'indépendance de la Perse. L'arrangement n'a d'autre but que celui d'éviter toute cause de malentendus entre les Parties Contractantes sur le terrain des affaires Persanes. Le Gouvernement du Schah se convaincra que l'accord survenu entre la Russie et l'Angleterre ne pourra que contribuer de la manière la plus efficace à la sécurité, à la prospérité et au développement intérieur de la Perse.

Veuillez-vous entendre avec votre Collègue d'Angleterre qui sera muni par son Gouvernement des mêmes instructions afin de faire au Gouvernement Persan une communication officielle identique rédigée dans les termes du présent télégramme.

No. 522.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 121.)

Vienna, D. September 5, 1907.

R. September 9, 1907.

Sir,

The news of the signature of the Anglo-Russian Agreement has been favourably received by the Vienna Press. Although any criticism of its contents is not yet possible the mere fact that England and Russia have come to an understanding relating, as is generally believed, to the Affairs of Central Asia and Persia, is held to be an event of the greatest political significance and one calculated to still further secure the general peace to which the recent meetings of Sovereigns and leading statesmen have already so largely contributed. . . .⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

E. GOSCHEN.

(1) [The omitted paragraphs give summaries of Press notices.]

No. 523.

*Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Marienbad, September 5, 1907.

M. Iswolsky arrived today in Marienbad to have the honour of lunching with the King. As His Excellency arrived at 12, and luncheon was not till 1 o'clock, I invited him to my hotel and took the opportunity of having some conversation with him. Of course we talked at once of the Convention, which, as I reminded him, had been foreshadowed in a conversation between His Majesty and himself at a lunch at the British Legation in Copenhagen when he and I were colleagues together. I told him that I was sure that it was greatly owing to his tact and conciliatory spirit and to the broadminded views, which he has always displayed in our political talks together at Copenhagen, that this eminently useful work had been brought to a successful conclusion; and I admired the courage and patience which had enabled him to triumph over all the difficulties and opposition which lay in his path. He admitted that the difficulties had been great, and that he had sometimes been almost in despair. He was under the impression that we thought him too German, and he *knew* that the Germans thought him too English, but as a matter of fact he was Russian, and his only idea was to do the best for his country. He said that the idea of the arrangement had at the beginning been most distasteful to Germany, and that it had required all the patience at his command to withstand the continual "hammering" to which he had been subjected from Berlin, and to remain at the same time good friends with Germany. In this he had been much helped by his old colleague, M. de Schoen, who had always done his best to make things as little unpleasant as possible. Alluding to Nicolson, he said that a wiser choice of negotiator could not possibly have been made. He had always been good tempered and friendly, and had never lost patience for a single moment, displaying at the same time political sagacity and insight of the highest order. He had always thoroughly understood and appreciated the difficulties of his (M. Iswolsky's) position in view of the state of Russian internal politics, and had always touched the right note when discords might have been produced by a less sure hand. He congratulated himself that he had to do with a ~~man~~ so eminently qualified in every way to carry on such difficult and delicate

(1) [Carnock MSS.]

negotiations. Returning to the Convention itself, he said that his troubles were by no means over. He was sure that he would be subjected to violent criticism. The liberal party in Russia, to which, as I might remember, he belonged in spirit, was now, and always had been, in favour of an agreement with Great Britain; from them he would receive every support. But the military party and the ~~general~~ staff were to a man against him, and from them and the reactionary party generally he expected an avalanche of criticism as soon as the Convention was published. To him the chief significance of the arrangement was peace in the Far East, and time for the political and military regeneration of the Empire. Talking of the Far East, he said that he had moments of depression when fears would come into his mind lest the zeal of the more distant agents of both countries might outrun their discretion, and so give rise to incidents of an unpleasant nature. Such occurrences were by no means rare in remote districts. He himself was firmly resolved to do all in his power to prevent all cause for friction, and to see that the Convention was carried out not only in the letter, but also in the spirit. He trusted that His Majesty's Government would do the same, and that in any case the greatest patience would be exercised on both sides.

In Persia he anticipated considerable difficulty. The language of the Articles of the Convention dealing with that country had been chosen with the greatest care: nevertheless there were certain clauses which could not fail to be somewhat unpalatable to the Persian Government. Any difficulties which might arise, however, would easily be met if the two Signatory Powers remained firm and united. His Excellency here hinted that he was by no means easy in his mind with regard to German action in Persia. The German Government seemed to him to be too busy there, and to be anxious to gain a footing totally out of proportion to their actual interests. He also gave me to understand that sooner or later he would have to come to some definite arrangement with them with regard to Persian matters. His Excellency added that it had been reported to him that the Germans had been at the bottom of the trouble on the Persian frontier, with a view to stepping in as mediators and so increasing their influence and prestige in Persia. He did not exactly believe this report, but still he could not banish it from his mind, and it made him uneasy.

M. Iswolsky then turned to the European situation. He said that, though the Convention chiefly dealt with the Far East and distant countries, he hoped that it would make its effect felt also nearer Home. He was eminently satisfied with your statements on the subject of Macedonia, and with what he had heard of Sir Charles Hardinge's conversations with Baron d'Aehrenthal, and as long as His Majesty's Government remained in the same mind in which he understood them now to be all would go well. He knew how much you were urged to go forward, and how much pressure was brought to bear on His Majesty's Government in that direction. But he hoped and trusted that you would continue to resist this pressure. Russia was bound to keep well with Austria in the Near East Question, and both countries had to be careful as regards Germany. He had received most satisfactory assurances of support from Prince Bülow, but he felt that that support depended on a thread, and that a too forward and too hasty policy might defeat its own end, and lead to the stiffening of the Sultan's back by Germany and consequent protracted opposition and delay. "As long as we all remain united all will be well, but the slightest sign of want of unity amongst the Powers will have fatal results. So that if you have an opportunity of writing to Sir E. Grey I hope you will beg him not to increase the 'tempo.'"

I asked him how the Judicial Reforms were getting on. He replied that it had been his wish that the two Ambassadors should have presented a *complete* project to their colleagues. This, however, had not been found altogether possible, and some alternative clauses had been introduced in the project. This of course meant a certain delay, which was regrettable but unavoidable.

In speaking of the difficulties and hard work of his post, M. Iswolsky touched

on the preliminary negotiations with regard to the Hague Conference. These, he said, had cost him more anxiety and labour than all his other work put together. He told me that, to his great surprise, he had found that in the matter of the Armaments discussion Baron d'Aehrenthal had been more recalcitrant and more obstinate than Prince Bülow. He said that it had been generally understood that Austria's policy had been more or less dictated from Berlin. All he could say was that if this was true Baron d'Aehrenthal "had greatly exceeded his instructions!" and that at one time, owing to His Excellency's attitude he had almost given up all hope of the Conference assembling at all.

After luncheon M. Iswolsky had a private audience with the King, at the conclusion of which His Majesty presented him with a Grand Cross of the Victorian Order. M. Iswolsky expressed to me afterwards his deep appreciation of this distinction and his high sense of the gracious and kindly reception which had been accorded to him by His Majesty.

Before leaving Marienbad M. Iswolsky said to me that he must give something to the Press. They were clamouring for information as to the Convention in Russia and some even of the more moderate papers were joining their reactionary contemporaries in abusing him for his silence. I was rather against making any communication, but I admitted that, if it was limited to generalities, there could be no harm in it. We therefore drew up a very vague statement to the effect that the Convention would not be published until after its ratification, but that everyone might rest assured that it contained nothing which could possibly arouse the susceptibilities of any Power whatsoever, that it was designed to eliminate in the future all grounds for misunderstandings between the two countries, and that it thus formed a fresh guarantee for the preservation of the general peace.

I am glad to be able to report that the cure has, as usual, agreed wonderfully with the King, and that His Majesty both looks and is in the very best of health. His Majesty leaves for England to-morrow afternoon.

Yours very sincerely,

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 524.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/372.

Foreign Office, September 7, 1907.

Tel. (No. 108.)

D. 3.15 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] No. 246 of Sep[tember] 6.⁽¹⁾

Anglo-Russian Convention.

It is very important to delay publication of any portion until that resp[ectin]g Afghanistan has been comm[unicate]d officially to Amir. This will take about 16 days.

You should concert with your Russian colleague who is receiving similar instructions as to making identic official communication to Persian Gov[ernmen]t in following terms:

"The Gov[ernmen]ts of G[rea]t Britain and Russia desiring to avoid any cause of conflict between their respective interests in certain regions of Persia contiguous with or in the immediate neighbourhood of frontiers of Afghanistan and of Beluchistan or Beluchistan on the one hand, and of Russian frontier on the other, have signed a friendly arrangement on the subject.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, Sir C. Spring-Rice referred in this telegram to the danger of allowing a "long interval to pass between announcement of signature and an explanatory statement." He suggests publication of an official communiqué through Reuter and the Russian Telegraph Agency.]

"In that Agreement the two Governments mutually agree to the strict integrity and independence of Persia, and testify that they sincerely desire the pacific (? development) of that country as well as the permanent establishment of equal advantages for the commerce and industry of all other nations. Each of the two States further engages not to seek concessions of any nature whatsoever in the regions adjoining or in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of the other. In order to prevent misunderstandings in the future, and to avoid creating an order of things which might place the Persian Government in an embarrassing situation in any respect whatever, the above-mentioned regions are clearly defined in the Arrangement. In mentioning the revenues which are affected to the loans concluded by Persian Government with the Discount and Loan Bank and with Imperial Bank of Persia, the Russian and British Governments recognize that these revenues will be in the future affected to the same purpose as in the past. And the two Governments equally engage, in the case of irregularities in the amortization or in the payment of interest of above-mentioned loan, to enter on a friendly exchange of views in order to determine by common agreement the measures of control which it would be necessary to take, and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles of that Arrangement.

"In signing that Arrangement, the two States have not for a moment lost sight of the fundamental principle of the absolute respect of the integrity and the independence of Persia. The Arrangement has no other object than that of avoiding any cause of misunderstanding between the Contracting Parties on the ground of Persian affairs. The Government of the Shah will convince itself that the agreement arrived at between Russia and Great Britain can but contribute in the most efficacious manner to the security, the prosperity, and the ulterior development of Persia."

You should request Persian Gov[ernmen]t to consider this information as confidential until publication here.

If Persian Gov[ernmen]t enquire as to definition of regions adjoining respective frontiers you may communicate following details:—

Russian line starts from Kasr-i-Shirin crosses and includes Isfahan Yezd and Kaphk ending at point on Persian frontier at intersection of Russian and Afghan frontiers.

British line goes from Afghan frontier viâ Gazik, Birjand, Kerman ending at Bunder Abbas.

No. 525.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 458.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 7, 1907.

R. September 16, 1907.

I called on M. Goubastoff yesterday, and told him that His Majesty's Government accepted the communication which the Russian Government proposed should be made to the Persian Government in regard to the arrangement recently concluded between Great Britain and Russia concerning Persia.⁽¹⁾ I added that you were of opinion that in the event of the Persian Government requesting to be furnished with information regarding the delimitation of the two zones, the Russian and British Representatives at Tehran might supply the desired details.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 578-9, No. 518, and p. 581, No. 521, *encl.*, and *infra*, pp. 589-90, No. 529, *encl.*]

M. Goubastoff said he quite agreed with this suggestion and asked if he could now telegraph instructions to M. de Hartwig. I replied that he could do so, as my Government would send similar instructions to Sir C. Spring-Rice as soon as they heard from me that the Russian Government were in accord.

I told M. Goubastoff that M. Isvolsky had asked me to enquire of His Majesty's Government whether they would have any objection to a joint communication being made to the Chinese Government by the two Representatives of the Arrangement regarding Thibet.⁽²⁾ I had received a telegram from you to say that you agreed with this course and had suggested that the two Representatives might take advantage of the opportunity to approach the Chinese Government in regard to the prohibition of scientific Missions. M. Goubastoff said that two or three days ago the text of the Thibet Arrangement had been despatched by post to the Russian Minister at Peking, where it would arrive in 18 or 20 days, and he had been informed that he would later receive instructions by telegraph. He enquired if Sir J. Jordan would be in possession of the text. I replied that I could not say for certain: but if not, he could doubtless procure a copy from his Russian colleague. I suggested that Monsieur Goubastoff should telegraph to the Russian Minister in a few days to concert with Sir J. Jordan in the sense His Majesty's Government desired, and he promised to do so.

I said there was another point on which I wished to speak to him, and that was in regard to the communications to be made to the Powers. Monsieur Isvolsky had proposed that, apart from the joint communication at Tehran and at Peking, each Government should be at liberty to communicate the Convention to those Powers whom it might select. My Government saw no objection to this on condition that the communication should be verbal and strictly confidential, and that the Powers in general should not be made acquainted with the text of the Convention until a few days before its publication. Monsieur Goubastoff said that the Russian Government would like to give the French Government a general idea of the Convention: and I replied that I was sure that my Government would not object to this course on the conditions above stated. I should like, I said, to add privately that it would be wise to say nothing at Washington as it was most difficult to prevent leakages there. I left with Monsieur Goubastoff a "Notice," of which I have the honour to enclose a copy in regard to the subjects on which I had spoken to him.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 525.

Notice communicated by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Gubastov.

Le Gouvernement Britannique accepte le projet de communication à faire au Gouvernement Persan. Si ce dernier demande à savoir le tracé des zones respectives, les deux Représentants, à l'avis du Gouvernement Britannique, peuvent y donner suite.

Le Gouvernement Britannique est prêt à donner des instructions au Ministre Anglais à Pékin de se concerter avec son Collègue de Russie pour communiquer en commun au Gouvernement Chinois l'arrangement concernant le Thibet. Les deux Représentants pourraient en même temps causer avec le Gouvernement Chinois au sujet de l'interdiction des missions scientifiques.

Le Gouvernement Britannique pense qu'il serait mieux de ne pas communiquer le texte de la Convention aux autres Puissances que quelques jours avant la publication: mais il ne voit pas d'objection à une communication verbale, mais à titre tout à fait confidentiel et secret, du sens de la Convention aux Puissances avec lesquelles les deux Gouvernements ont des relations intimes. Il est très essentiel de prier ces Puissances de garder le secret.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 579, No. 519, and *min.*]

La communication à l'Amir sera faite prochainement, et comme l'Amir est en tournée dans son pays on estime 16 jours avant que le texte de la Convention soit entre ses mains.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 24 août/6 Septembre, 1907.

No. 526.

Lord Morley to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur,

September 7, 1907.

Your welcome word of friendly salutation (Aug[ust] 30) finds me on Lake Lemman—my first holiday since we got our seals. It just anticipated a letter from me to you, to offer you my very warm congratulations on success in an extremely arduous and complex series of operations. For patience, resource, and tenacity, the sight of your work has been a liberal education to me. I should guess that it is one of the most skilful performances in the records of our British diplomacy.

I fancy that the fight in England will centre on Persia; but on that chapter, the contention will all turn on geographical *details* that will not much stir the Man in the Street, so long as the Gulf is left where it is. And on the general issue, public opinion will cordially approve. As you say, the results will depend on the spirit in which the thing is taken by officers and agents on the ground. We can hardly count on very loyal acquiescence on the part of the "majority" who gave trouble on the night of your serious hitch. And on the other hand, I shall have to keep a very vigilant eye in my diocese.

The Amir is 16 days from Simla, so he has not yet got the communication which we instructed L[or]d Minto to make to him. I hope he will not be troublesome, but he may be *slow*.

We owe you a great debt,—I mean the country. Grey,—and perhaps I for the moment,—have respectable characters with the directing classes. So I am in good heart.

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN MORLEY.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

No. 527.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 487.) Secret.

Sir,

Paris, D. September 9, 1907.

R. September 10, 1907.

I showed to the President of the Council this morning a summary of the Anglo-Russian Convention signed on the 31st ultimo.

Monsieur Clemenceau promised to keep secret the information which I had given him and he said that he thought that it was very satisfactory to have settled the questions with which the Convention dealt particularly that of Persia as it cleared the ground for a discussion of the question of the Bagdad Railway and of the Persian Gulf which latter would really be the important one if it were raised.

I observed to His Excellency that our policy in regard to the Persian Gulf had been publicly declared by both political parties in England, and if any Power showed an inclination to oppose our interests as thus publicly defined it would mean that that Power desired to seek a quarrel with us.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE.

Sir F. Bertie was justified in saying what he did, but as we are shortly going to publish a declaration about the Persian Gulf, we need not say anything more meanwhile.⁽¹⁾

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [The declaration as to the Persian Gulf was published on September 26, with the text of the treaty. It is printed *supra*, pp. 501-2, No. 455.]

No. 528.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Tehran, September 10, 1907.

F.O. 371/372.

D. 1.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 252.)

R. 5 P.M.

I am informed that opposition to agreement would be much counteracted if the two Powers would consent to join Persia in asking adherence of other Powers to clause respecting independence etc as this would be regarded as pledge of good faith and proof that we mean principles in question to be part of public law and not subject to the will of two Powers.

(Sent to India.)

No. 529.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/373.

Gulahek, D. September 13, 1907.

(No. 199.)

R. September 30, 1907.

Sir,

I have the honour to state that on receipt of your telegram No. 108 of the 7th instant.⁽¹⁾ relative to the Anglo-Russian agreement, I called on the Russian Minister with a view to drawing up an identic note, in the terms of your instructions, for confidential communication to the Persian Government.

Monsieur de Hartwig had received a telegram from his Government containing instructions as to the terms of the note. His Chancery had been unable to decypher it and I accordingly gave him a copy of the text as telegraphed by you.

As some delay would have been caused by a further reference to St. Petersburg, which we were both anxious to avoid in view of the prevailing excitement caused by the news of the signature of the convention, he agreed to send in a note in Persian (translation enclosed) which was drawn up by Abbas Kuli Khan and the Oriental Secretary of the Russian Legation, in the terms of your instruction.

I suggested two slight alterations to which he agreed, and which, I trust, will meet with you[r] approval. The first was the insertion of a clause relative to concessions. We thought it advisable to make a reference to the fact that foreign concessions were forbidden by the constitution without the consent of the Assembly, and we have consequently, in our note, inserted the proviso "if the Persian Government agrees to foreign concessions at all." The second had reference to the arrangement in the eventuality of the non-payment of the interest on English and Russian loans. We

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 584-5, No. 524.]

thought it better to avoid using the word "control" which might have been misunderstood, and we consequently agreed on a wording which alluded to the measures to be taken according to international law for safeguarding the interests of creditors.

We propose to inform the Foreign Minister that he is at liberty to explain to the Assembly, which is pressing for information, that the two Governments have communicated an explanatory memorandum setting forth the general objects of the agreement, and that the text will be confidentially communicated when it is received.

I informed Monsieur de Hartwig that I had heard that the popular leaders desired, as a pledge of good faith, that the adhesion of other Governments should be obtained. We both agreed that, as the arrangement would be no doubt officially communicated to the great Powers of Europe, it would be advisable to take advantage of this formality in order to enable the Persian Government to assure the public that the clause in the preamble, as to the independence and integrity of Persia, and freedom and equality of trade and commerce, was concurred in by other European Nations, and could be therefore regarded as containing a principle accepted by all the Nations of the world. It might even be possible to associate the Persian Government itself in the formal communication. I ventured to telegraph to you on the subject which appears to me to be of some importance if we wish to avoid arousing popular opposition in this country to the agreement we have concluded.

I venture to add that the opposition excited in China and in Morocco to the recent agreements concerning those countries has not passed without notice from the Persian press, and that it may possibly be thought advisable by the English and Russian Governments to take into consideration local feeling and the *amour propre* of a sensitive people in making their final arrangements with regard to this country.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Enclosure in No. 529.

Translation of joint note addressed by British and Russian Legations to Persian Government.⁽²⁾

F.O. 371/373.

September 11, 1907.

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia, desiring to avoid any cause of conflict between their respective interests in certain regions in Persia contiguous to, or in the immediate neighbourhood of, [the] frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, on the one hand, and the Russian frontier, on the other hand, have signed a friendly agreement on the subject.

In that agreement the two Governments mutually agree to the strict integrity and independence of Persia and testify that they sincerely desire the pacific development of that country as well as the permanent establishment of equal advantages for commerce and industry of all other nations. Each of the two States further engages, in case the Persian Government grants concessions to foreigners, not to seek concessions adjoining, or in the neighbourhood of, the frontiers of the other. In order to prevent misunderstandings in future and to avoid creating an order of things which might place the Persian Government in an embarrassing situation in any respect whatever, the above-mentioned regions are clearly defined in the arrangement. In mentioning the revenues which are affected to the loans concluded by the Persian Gov[ernmen]t with the Discount and loan Bank and the Imperial Bank of Persia, the Russian and British Governments recognize that these revenues will be in future affected to the same purpose as in the past and the two Governments equally engage in the case of irregularities in the amortization or in the payment of interest of the above-mentioned loans to enter on a friendly exchange of views in order to determine by common

⁽²⁾ [Printed in *A. & P.* (1912-13), CXXII, (Cd. 6077), pp. 51-4, and *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 102 (1913), pp. 906-7.]

agreement the measures which, in conformity with the law of Nations, it would be necessary to take *in order to safeguard the interests* of the creditors and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles of that arrangement.

In signing that arrangement the two States have not for a moment lost sight of the fundamental principle of absolute respect of the integrity and independence of Persia. The arrangement has no other object than that of avoiding any cause of misunderstanding between the contracting parties on the ground of Persian affairs. The Government of the Shah will convince himself that the agreement arrived at between Russia and Great Britain can but contribute in the most efficacious manner to the security of the prosperity and the ultimate development of Persia.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On September 4, Sir C. Spring-Rice had sent a previous explanatory letter to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs. He reported this in his despatch No. 202 of September 13, *infra*, pp. 590–2, No. 530, but did not send a copy of the actual communication. The text was, however, published at the time in the Persian press and was reprinted in E. G. Browne: *The Persian Revolution* (1910), pp. 190–2, where the date is given as September 5. As the result of a debate in the House of Commons on December 14, 1911 (*Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Vol. 32, p. 2600), inquiries were made by the Foreign Office and a copy of the letter obtained (F.O. 4266/4266/12/34). In a debate in the House of Commons on February 21, 1912, Sir E. Grey stated that the letter was an unofficial communication, and that Sir C. Spring-Rice “regarded it as so unofficial that he did not send it home at the time, and that is why I never saw it.” (*Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Vol. 34, pp. 672–3.)]

No. 530.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/373.

(No. 202.)

Sir,

Gulahek, D. September 13, 1907.

R. September 30, 1907.

For some time past, owing to rumours of the impending conclusion of an Anglo-Russian agreement respecting Persia, there has been some excitement in political circles here. The reassuring statements made by yourself and Monsieur Isvolsky to the Mushir ul Mulk do not appear to have been known. I communicated to the Foreign Minister the sense of those statements of which you had been good enough to inform me: but he does not appear to have given them publicity.

On the 2nd instant it was rumoured in the town that the agreement had been signed on August 31st, and it was added that the two Powers had agreed to divide Persia into spheres of influence and that intervention would take place immediately.

I had taken for granted that I should have been informed either by you, Sir, or by Sir A. Nicolson of the signature of the agreement and therefore stated in reply to inquiries that I had had no information of the signature, which I accordingly did not believe had taken place, and that in any case there could be no question of a division of Persia, or of intervention. In order to put a stop to such rumours I again communicated in writing to the Minister for Foreign Affairs a statement of the assurances made by the two Governments to the Shah's special envoy: and I took measures to make this statement generally known.

On the 2nd instant Monsieur de Hartwig informed me that he had received the official notification of the signature and that the two Legations would receive instructions by messenger as to the manner of the communication to the Persian Government. We agreed that in the present state of public opinion a long delay would be inadvisable in view of the growing excitement, as to which we had both received abundant evidence. We informed our Governments accordingly.

On September 4th I received from the Foreign Office the formal notification of the signature. In the meantime although public opinion should, as it would seem, have been fully occupied by the murder of the Attabek, and the formation of a new Government, the question of the Anglo-Russian agreement was discussed in the Majlis and in the secret societies, and according to the information which reached me from various quarters, the comments generally made were hostile to the two Governments and generally of a very virulent character, especially against England who was regarded as having sold Persia to Russia and as having betrayed the cause of Persian independence. In view of the impotence of the Government and the general state of disorder which prevails in the country, I considered that energetic measures were necessary in order to put a stop, if possible, to the growing excitement.

I called on a gentleman connected with the political societies who had been deputed to interrogate Mr. Churchill as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government.

He said that his friends had been accustomed to look to England for sympathy and support, and that they were convinced that England was vitally interested in the maintenance of Persian power. The news of the conclusion of the agreement was a great blow to them. However disguised, it meant that Russia was given a free hand in the North, that is over the seat of Government, and that England had definitely withdrawn her opposition to Russian aggression in return for a share of the spoil. This meant for Persia a hopeless situation: she had no means of resistance and would have to yield once and for all to Russian control.

I explained to him at length the nature and objects of the agreement: that you had elaborately discussed its provisions with the Mushir ul Mulk,⁽¹⁾ that it secured the formal recognition of the independence and integrity of Persia, and the principle of the open door, and that it contained a provision that neither party should attempt to obtain concessions in the frontier provinces injurious to the other. I pointed out that the agreement was but one of many, all couched in similar terms, and all aiming at the maintenance of the *status quo* in Asia, and a final conclusion of the policy of aggression which had so long been pursued by the European nations, with such deplorable results both to themselves and to the Asiatic peoples. I said that there was nothing in the agreement to wound the susceptibilities of the Persian people and that agreements of a somewhat similar character had been made by the Great Powers with regard to some smaller European nations, which had had the happiest results. I urged that if Persia took advantage of the new situation created by the agreement, she would be able henceforth, without fear of interference, to devote herself to the task of reform and progress.

He listened with attention and promised to repeat what I had said, but he added that the Assembly would expect to be consulted.

I said that I had just heard from you that a confidential communication should be immediately made by the two Legations to the Persian Government explaining the provisions of the agreement and that the actual text, as soon as it was received, would be confidentially communicated to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs who would no doubt consult the secret committee of the Assembly. It was the duty, I said, of the leaders of public opinion to explain to the people that until the text of the agreement was known they should reserve their judgment, and above all it was essential that nothing should be done or said to inflame public resentment against foreigners, as any attack on them would lead to those very consequences which we all wished to prevent.

He assured me that the popular leaders were fully aware of the danger, but that they were deeply imbued with the distrust of Russia, and that their confidence in England had received a rude shock. I asked him if he thought that England had done a disservice to Persia in securing a formal recognition of her independence and integrity and whether England would have done more for the popular cause in

(1) [*cp. supra*, pp. 474-5, No. 427.]

refusing to negotiate with Russia, in openly encouraging the popular movement, and in thus giving Russia a pretext—and more than a pretext—for interfering by force of arms. Russia had, I firmly believed, been actuated throughout the negotiations by the determination not to intervene by force: and this was mainly due to the abstention by England from any form of interference. Finally the agreement had been concluded and Persia was relieved for ever from the fear of foreign intervention as long as she respected the lives and the properties of foreign residents.

With regard to the special arrangements made between England and Russia, their object was to avoid for ever all causes of friction arising from the mutual fear that each would use undue influence in Persia to secure advantages detrimental to the other. This competition had had the most deplorable effect on Persia: it had been the cause of the loans which had ruined her finances, and of the diplomatic pressure which had impaired her independence. I hoped it would be now at an end.

He replied that if things were as I stated the agreement would be an advantage to Persia. But I knew, he said, that the Persian people were now determined to grant no further concessions to foreigners. I said if this were so the agreement as to concessions would fall to the ground and be no longer necessary, but we had to consider the possibility of a breakdown of the new institutions and a return to the old system. For that event we had provided, by binding ourselves not to ask for concessions injurious to each other. There was nothing in that offensive to the Persian people. He agreed, but said that it would be wise to insert a clause to the effect that “*if foreign Concessions were given, the two Governments would not ask for concessions mutually injurious.*”

He then said that his friends were agreed that although a guarantee by England and Russia was of undoubted value, it would be of more value, and inspire more confidence, if other Powers were invited to adhere to it. It was the intention of the Persian people, or at any rate of his friends, to demand the recognition of these principles, not by the two Powers alone, but by all the Great Powers of Europe. He hoped that no obstacle would be placed in the way of this project by the English Government. I have informed you of this suggestion, which has reached me from many sources, in my telegram No. 252 of the 10th instant.⁽²⁾ The reasons which he urged for making this proposal were mainly based on the popular conviction that a *dual* arrangement between England and Russia could easily be changed from one of non-intervention to one of joint intervention: but that if the adherence of other Powers was invited, this would be regarded as a proof that the clause as to the independence and integrity was not, as was thought, a mere blind, but was seriously intended to be a fundamental principle to be solemnly incorporated in the public law of nations.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 588, No. 528.]

No. 531.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/312.

(No. 203.)

Sir,

Gulahek, D. September 13, 1907.

R. September 30, 1907.

I have the honour to report that the local press is taking up a violent attitude against His Majesty's Government in connection with the conclusion of the *entente* with Russia. I enclose translations by Mr. Smart of articles which have appeared in the “*Hablul-Matin*” of Tehran.⁽¹⁾ Similar articles are appearing in other newspapers. You will observe that Russia is hardly mentioned, and that the articles are directed

(1) [Not reproduced.]

almost entirely against England. The mention of the fact that Isfahan and Kermanshah are included in the Russian line points to foreign inspiration. No mention has been made of such a provision by any member of this Legation. The Saad-ed-Dowleh, as I have already pointed out is in close connection with the "Hablul Matin" and has strong Russian sympathies. The Court party will of course do their best to irritate public opinion against England, and thus to put an end to the English sympathies of the popular party, and, *per contra*, to alienate the sympathies of England from her former friends.

The task is not a difficult one. It appears quite impossible to convince popular opinion that Russia will ever desist from her designs on Persia and her new liberties. The fact that the liberal Government of liberal England has made an agreement with Russia about Persia is quoted as a proof that there has been a corrupt bargain by which England, for certain practical advantages, abandons Persia to Russian control in spite of all her promises to the contrary, and in spite of the natural sympathy of a people already free for one which is struggling for freedom.

The result of the agreement, as I have had the honour to point out on several occasions, will probably be to create a very strong feeling of indignation against England and Englishmen—far stronger in fact than against Russia, who is not accused of disguising her policy or of ever having seriously pretended to friendship for the Persian people, or a desire for Persian prosperity and independence.

I trust that, on reflection, a different view may be taken, but there can be no doubt as to the present current of public opinion, or as to the fact that England will be held responsible for any action which Russia may take in the future against Persia or in support of the Shah against the popular party. And as England is less an object of fear than Russia, it is probable that Persian irritation will be directed against England as the safer course.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

MINUTES.

The annoyance of the Persians at not being able to play off Russia against England any more to their own advantage was to be foreseen but there does not appear to be any cause for alarm at the irritation displayed towards England.

C. H.

And all this was written before the text of the Agreement was known in Persia; we are told it has been well received there.

E. G.

No. 592.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward,

September 13, 1907.

I congratulate you on the signature and I hope you are enjoying a well deserved rest. Your difficulties are over for the time. I venture however to warn you that difficulties here may be beginning. It is not necessary after Moroccan experience to point out why. The Persians are beginning an agitation which may be formidable; that is formidable to the English here or who have interests here. There is the further consideration of the effect of the agreement on Mohammedan public feeling here and in Afghanistan. This of course you are prepared for.

Hartwig shares my feelings. He says it is difficult to persuade his government that Persia has changed. They seem to believe that the old state of things

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 31.]

continues to exist and that Persian public feeling can be safely ignored because the Persian people are not serious. A child with a match box is not a serious person but he can be a dangerous one. That depends not on the child but on the matches. In this case the matches do burn.

I do not wish to be alarmist but it is impossible to ignore what is happening here; the entire disorganization of government, the feud between Shah and people; the conviction that Russia is secretly on the side of the Shah, and that the Shah is determined to organize disorder throughout the country in order to bring on intervention; the belief that the two European Governments are privy to the plan and have made their arrangements to profit by it.

If we take no measures to safeguard our interests and our people we do not know what may happen at any moment. If we do take such measures we are accused of preparing for annexation and a division of Persian territory with Russia. We are worse off than the Russians because we are not feared as they are and because we are regarded as having betrayed the Persian people. All assurances English and Russian are regarded as so many bluffs and it is unfortunately true that though the Russian Government has made the most satisfactory promises and explanations those who are supposed to be in the confidence of Russia and are known to frequent the Russian Legation are the open enemies of the new order of things which the Persians are so proud of and to which they look to cure all the ills of the country. And we are supposed to be accomplices, for our own advantage and for a consideration. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,
C. A. SPRING-RICE.

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to personal affairs and opinions.]

No. 533.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Spring-Rice.

F.O. 371/372.

Tel. (No. 117.)

(Agreement respecting Persia.)

Your telegram No. 252.⁽¹⁾

Foreign Office, September 14, 1907.

D. 2 P.M.

We would not favour such a course which would give Powers, especially Germany, excuse for interfering in Persian affairs. You should discourage idea, and if approached you should say that a formal Agreement between the two Powers chiefly interested in Persia owing to their geographical position should be ample, and that we should regard such a request from Persian Government as amounting to a slur on our good faith.

Russian Government have promised to instruct Russian Minister to conform his attitude to yours.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 588, No. 528.]

No. 534.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/372.

(No. 476.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 14, 1907.

R. September 30, 1907.

I called on Monsieur Goubastow yesterday and mentioned to him that information had reached Sir C. Spring-Rice that the arrangement which had been

concluded between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia in regard to Persia would be rendered more acceptable to the Persian Government if other Governments were invited to join in the recognition of the integrity and independence of that country. I also gave His Excellency the substance of the reply which you proposed to send to the above suggestion,⁽¹⁾ and left with him an *Aide-mémoire* of which I have the honour to enclose a copy.

Monsieur Goubastow said that he had heard nothing from Monsieur de Hartwig on the subject; and enquired what steps he should take. I said that perhaps he would kindly communicate to Monsieur de Hartwig the substance of the *Aide-mémoire*, and instruct him to shape his attitude on that of Sir C. Spring-Rice. This he said he would do. I pointed out to Monsieur Goubastow that it was desirable to check at once any tendency of the Persian Government to mingle other Governments in the matter of our Arrangement; and it seemed to me that an endeavour on the part of that Government to seek to confirm our engagements as to the integrity of their country by soliciting the endorsement of other Powers was neither courteous nor necessary.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 534.

Aide-mémoire communicated by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Gubastov.

Le Ministre d'Angleterre à Téhéran a raison de croire que l'arrangement au sujet de la Perse serait rendu plus acceptable au Gouvernement Persan si les deux Puissances consentiront à s'associer avec la Perse pour solliciter l'adhésion d'autres Etats à la clause reconnaissant l'indépendance et l'intégrité de ce pays. On pense que cette démarche serait considérée comme un gage de bonne foi et comme une preuve du désir des deux Puissances de faire baser l'intégrité de la Perse sur le droit public et de ne pas la faire dépendre de leur bonne volonté.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique se propose de faire savoir au Ministre d'Angleterre qu'il doit décourager l'idée ci-dessus énoncée car le Gouvernement Britannique est d'avis qu'une pareille démarche fournirait à d'autres Puissances un prétexte de s'ingérer dans les affaires persanes. Si on s'adresse au Ministre il devrait répondre qu'un arrangement formellement conclu entre les deux Puissances principalement intéressées en Perse, en vue de leur position géographique, devrait constituer un gage suffisant et que le Gouvernement Britannique envisagerait une pareille démarche de la part du Gouvernement Persan comme mettant sa bonne foi en doute.

Le Gouvernement Britannique serait heureux de savoir si le Gouvernement Impérial était disposé d'envoyer des instructions identiques à son Représentant.

St. Pétersbourg, le 31 août/13 septembre 1907.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 535.

King Edward to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Tulchan Lodge, Advie, Strathspey, N.B.,

September 17, 1907.

Many thanks for your kind letter just received of 11th Inst[ant].

I am very glad that Sir C. Hardinge delivered my message to you. Nobody congratulates you more sincerely than I do that the successful ending of the most

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

difficult negotiations with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are now accomplished. The Anglo-Russian Convention is a great triumph for British Diplomacy and the way in which you carried out that most difficult task entitles you to the well merited approval of your Sovereign and Country!

I was much pleased with my conversation with M. Isvolsky at Marienbad on 5th Inst[ant] and to renew my acquaintance with him.⁽²⁾ He is undoubtedly a very able man and I believe honest and straightforward. He praised you very much and the manner in which you conducted the negotiations with him—rejoicing at the same time that so able a British Ambassador had been appointed to St. Petersburg.

Hoping that you will now get some rest from your labours.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,
EDWARD R.

(²) [*cp. supra*, pp. 582-4, No. 523.]

No. 536.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 17, 1907.

F.O. 371/325.

Tel. (No. 192.)

D. 8.12 P.M.

R. 10.30 P.M.

Anglo-Russian Convention.

We propose to exchange ratifications on the 23rd instant, and Russian Government suggest that communication should be made to Great Powers on the 24th instant and publication on the 26th instant.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asks if British Ambassador at Washington could give Russian Ambassador at Washington a copy of Convention for communication to United States' Government, as Russian Ambassador has none, and it would take some time for one to be sent from here. Pray inform me if you approve above dates and procedure.⁽¹⁾

I have asked them to send instructions to Tehran to communicate text on 24th September, and to inform Minister for Foreign Affairs that there are no Secret Articles.

(¹) [The procedure adopted by the British Government was to send copies of the agreement by post to Washington with instructions to communicate on the 24th or as soon after as possible. In case the text should not arrive by the 24th, a text was given on that day to the United States' Ambassador at London. A text was given on the same day to Baron Komura. It was sent by post to Rome, Vienna and Madrid. It had already been sent to the British Ambassadors at Paris and Berlin, who were instructed to communicate it on the 24th.]

No. 537.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, September 18, 1907.

I send you a copy of a letter, which you will find interesting.

I can't tell you how much all of us, who have been cognizant of the Russian negotiations admire the way you have handled them. Certainly since I have been at the F[oreign] O[ffice] I can say without qualification that in everything in which you have been engaged, you have made a success. I wish you could be multiplied at will so as to be available at once in every place where there were difficulties.

(¹) [Carnock MSS.]

We shall have to keep the Russians up to the spirit of the Agreement in dealing with their local agents.

Cambon said to me yesterday that we had got much the best of the Agreement and on my remarking that it would be criticized in some quarters in this country he said "Those who criticize will do so without knowledge; you have secured a great part of the Persian Littoral, strengthened your position as regards the Gulf, and obtained a recognition of your Protectorate of Afghanistan. The inland of Persia of which the Russians have so much is mountains and desert" or words to that effect.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 538.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/312.

(No. 488.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 24, 1907.

R. September 30, 1907.

The Mushir ul Mulk, Persian Minister here, called upon me this afternoon prior to his departure for Tehran. He has been named Minister of Justice in the present Persian Cabinet, but owing to the sudden death of his father, the Mushir ed Dowlah, and the necessity of his attending to his private affairs, he is in doubt whether he will accept the post. He also had, I could see, some misgivings as to whether the present Cabinet would be of long duration.

I asked the Mushir ul Mulk how matters were proceeding in Persia, and he remarked that the great and pressing difficulty was the want of money, and he did not see how the country could emerge from the present crisis unless funds were obtainable. I remarked that, as far as I was able to understand, little or no funds were to be found in the country, and apparently the Assembly was strongly opposed to seeking for a loan outside of Persia. In these circumstances it seemed difficult to see a way out of the dilemma. The Mushir ul Mulk said that the Assembly and the people in general were in fact most strongly opposed to any foreign financial assistance, because loans could only be contracted under onerous conditions, and there was no security that their proceeds would be properly expended. I replied that I perfectly understood the latter objection, but I should have thought that it would have been possible to devise some means whereby the Assembly could exercise control over the mode of expenditure. If, as he said, money was urgently needed, and without money the country would go from bad to worse, I should have thought that a loan of moderate dimensions might offer a solution of the difficulty. So far as we were concerned there was this difficulty. He could well understand that we should not advance any money unless we were assured that it would be properly expended to meet urgent needs; and above all we should most certainly decline to give any assistance unless the Government and the Assembly were to solicit it. I could tell him frankly that the very last thing my Government would desire would be to furnish funds which might be employed in a manner which would facilitate even indirectly a return to the old order of things, and which might lead to a suppression of the rights which the Assembly had acquired. In short we should do nothing which might check or suppress a legitimate popular movement towards a liberal and constitutional régime. We had no desire to intervene in any way in the internal affairs of the country. But I should think that if the Assembly, backed by popular opinion, and urged by public necessity, were to solicit through the Government for the financial assistance of Russia and Great Britain, some means might be found of meeting their wishes. If a loan had to be made it seemed to me that it should be to Russia and Great Britain that Persia should look in preference to other Powers; and though it was possible that the conditions, in present circumstances, would not be particularly easy, still I did not consider that they need be unnecessarily onerous. However these were matters

for the Persians themselves to decide, and he would understand that I was merely speaking academically. The Mushir ul Mulk said he quite agreed with what I had said, and he was fully convinced that Great Britain would never take any steps which would run counter to the popular wishes. He would bear my remarks in mind. I observed that he must understand that we took no sides in the struggle proceeding in Persia; our attitude was strictly one of abstention, so long as British interests were not directly imperilled.

He then asked if he could be informed, confidentially, of the substance of our arrangement with Russia. I told him that a summary of the arrangement had already been communicated to his Government, and I believed that the full text would be handed in to-day to the Persian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. I, therefore, saw no objection to my giving him an outline of the agreement, and I proceeded to do so. He would see that the arrangement was eminently favourable to Persia, and how baseless were the reports that Russia and Great Britain had contemplated a partition of Persia. The two Powers had merely agreed not to annoy each other in certain regions, and the rights and prerogatives of the Persian Government were fully recognized and remained unaffected and undisturbed. It was not correct to speak of "spheres of influence," as by that expression it might appear as if the two Powers wished to restrict the liberty of action of the Persian Government in certain regions, and to exercise influence therein themselves. Nothing of this was meant by the arrangement; and all that had been agreed upon was that the two Powers would abstain from applying to the Persian Government for concessions and privileges in certain districts, so that there should be no clashing of interests and no more rivalries between Russia and Great Britain. To this surely the Persian Government could not object, and indeed they should be gratified at the restraint which each Power had imposed upon itself, and above all on their having solemnly recognized the integrity and independence of Persia.

The Mushir ul Mulk said the arrangement appeared to him thoroughly satisfactory, and he was pleased to think that what he termed "*la politique de bascule*" would have to be abandoned. He proceeded to say confidentially that he sincerely trusted that the Russian Legation would carry out the Arrangement in its spirit as well as in its letter. He considered that for that purpose it was much to be desired that a thorough reorganization should be made of that Legation, and that a new Representative should be sent to Persia to replace M. de Hartwig. The latter was of the Zinovieff school; opposed to all liberal movements, and anxious to keep the Eastern neighbours of Russia in a backward and stationary state. He knew that M. de Hartwig was at heart opposed to the Assembly, and that, through M. Chapsal, he exercised an unfortunate influence over the Shah, in encouraging His Majesty to place no confidence in the Representatives of the people. He considered that so long as M. de Hartwig remained as Russian Representative there was no likelihood of Russia regaining any popularity among or acquiring the confidence of the Persians. He did not himself believe that Russia had in any way changed her traditional policy; and that in a very few years it would be seen that she would be as active in Central Asia as formerly. The war with Japan and her internal troubles had checked her for the moment; but she was rapidly recovering from the effects of the former, and the Government were obtaining the mastery over the latter. In five or at the outside ten years she would be as strong and as enterprising as formerly, and if within that period Persia had not succeeded in becoming a prosperous and independent country under a constitutional régime he considered that his country was irrevocably lost. He regarded Russia as a most dangerous neighbour, and with that fear in his mind he welcomed cordially the arrangement which Great Britain had made as he considered that it did afford some hope that Russia would be more prudent and less disposed to follow an adventurous policy; and it did give some security to Persia.

The Mushir ul Mulk was educated at a Russian University and is a most intelligent man. Although I am well aware that Persians are adepts in concealing

their real sentiments I feel sure that he was speaking in all sincerity when he dwelt at length and with much emphasis on the fears which he held with regard to Russia. I see in the character sketches of the Members of the Persian Cabinet which Sir C. Spring-Rice has forwarded in his despatch No. 204 of the 13th instant,⁽¹⁾ that it is stated that the sympathies of the Mushir ul Mulk are "on the side of Russia." I should hardly be inclined to subscribe to this judging from the few conversations which I have had with him.

I merely replied to the Mushir ul Mulk that I trusted that Persia would never give any just cause for complaint on the part of Russia, and would do all that lay in her power to live in amicable relations with her powerful neighbour.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Sir A. Nicolson's language was most judicious and right and should be entirely approved.

The comments of the Mushir-ul-Mulk were very much to the point. We must lend no money except on terms approved by the Assembly. I hope Russia will take the same line. If the Assembly is strong enough to arrange for control of the expenditure and asks for a loan from us or Russia, I should be inclined to join in a loan as a means of putting Constitutional Gov[ernmen]t on its legs in Persia which is the only hope of strengthening Persia; but we should have to consider this with the India Office. I assume that if a loan is asked for it must be more than the £400,000 originally contemplated if it is to do any good.

E. G.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 539.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.

Tehran, September 25, 1907.

F.O. 371/372.

D. 7.40 A.M.

Tel. (No. 277.)

R. 12 noon.

Russian Minister and I have communicated Persian part of agreement to Persian Government and have informed them that agreement will be communicated to Great Powers. Russian Minister thought that a written statement that there is no secret clause would be an embarrassing precedent and a communication has been made verbally.

(Sent to India and St. Petersburg.)

MINUTES.

I think a verbal communication as to the absence of secret clauses was enough but the Russian Minister's objection to a written one is rather amusing.

H. N.

The verbal communication was better and the difficulty of making any communication is that the omission of it on future occasions may be taken to imply that secret articles do exist. No doubt in this case the Russians hope that there will be other developments from the Convention indirectly and are not anxious to emphasize its present completeness.

E. G.

No. 540.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

Berlin, D. October 1, 1907.

(No. 427.)

R. October 7, 1907.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 424 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the publication of the Anglo-Russian Convention has on the whole

been very favourably received in the German Press. All the papers contain full summaries of the text, and most of them expend a good deal of time and space in trying to decide whether England or Russia derive most benefit from the Convention. It is generally admitted, with satisfaction, that Germany's interests are in no way affected by the terms; in Afghanistan and Thibet she has no concern, and her relations with Persia are purely commercial and can only be improved by an arrangement which advocates the maintenance of the open door in that country.

The semi-official North German Gazette calls attention to the fact that although the Convention is signed by two Powers only, England and Russia, its universal political significance may be estimated from the fact that it will practically remove all existing causes of friction between England and Russia in Central Asia. It has come as no surprise to Germany, as its scope was foreshadowed by the Imperial Chancellor in a speech delivered on November 14th last, and the Convention as now published shows that Prince Bülow was justified in adopting so calm an attitude towards it as [*sic*] that time. Germany has no political aims in any of the countries concerned; and her commercial interests in Persia will in no wise be injuriously affected; on the contrary it is specifically declared that the trade and industry of other nations shall not be impaired. . . .⁽¹⁾

. . . . The commercial world here seem less well satisfied with the Agreement; several papers express their regret and annoyance at the fact that a Convention should have been signed without the participation of Germany between two Powers, who might quite conceivably have settled their differences at the expense of this country; and these papers also regard, or try to regard the portion of the Convention dealing with Persia as a possible menace to the legitimate commercial expansion of Germany in Persia. Thus for instance the Cologne Gazette consoles itself with the thought that in course of time Russian and British trade will trespass upon each other in Persia and will give rise to further friction between the two powers, of which the others, and Germany in particular should be quick to take due advantage; while the Frankfurter Zeitung, going further still, declares that the genesis of the negotiations lies in a period when Anglo-German relations were very bad, and that the Agreement is a child of English diplomacy which has been born too late into the world. The best that Germans can say of it is that it is a superfluous document; Anglo-German relations have improved meanwhile and Germany can regard the Anglo-Russian Convention with greater equanimity than she could last year; provided of course that the two Powers adhere rigidly to the text of the Treaty especially with regard to Persia, and that they allow German trade and industry free play in that country. If Persia were actually partitioned into commercial spheres as a result of this Treaty, Germany could at first do little, but such a development would hardly contribute to the peace of the world which English policy so persistently declares to be its one aim.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

MINUTE.

Not very favourable.

C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Further Press summaries follow.]

No. 541.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 133.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. October 4, 1907.

R. October 7, 1907.

On the eve of Monsieur Isvolsky's arrival in Vienna the Austrian press was replete with the most cordial expressions of welcome to His Excellency, and there was scarcely a journal that did not hail his arrival as the finishing torch to the

good work carried out during the past summer by Sovereigns and statesmen in the cause of peace. . . .⁽¹⁾

Since Monsieur Isvolsky has been here I have had but few opportunities of having any serious conversations with His Excellency, as we have both been much occupied, and he has never been more than two days in Vienna at a time. I called upon him today, however, and finding that he had a spare quarter of an hour, we had a short conversation. I told him that as there had been but few comments in the Vienna press on the subject of the agreements between our two countries, and that as the Emperor and Baron d'Aehrenthal had only spoken to me a few words on the subject expressive of their pleasure at the removal of causes of friction in so many parts of the world, I should be glad if he would give me his own impression of how the Agreements had been received in Austro-Hungarian political circles. His Excellency replied that actually his feeling was that, though there had been a remarkable reticence on the subject in the press, the Agreements had made a favourable impression on public opinion in Austria-Hungary. He had gathered this from his conversations with Baron d'Aehrenthal and other Austro-Hungarian statesmen. But he added, my real impression is that our Agreements do not interest them very much, except in so far that they form an additional guarantee for the general peace. About the details they do not seem to care at all, and as a matter of fact Austro-Hungarian statesmen are at this moment far too much interested in the result of the negotiations with Hungary and other internal questions to concentrate their minds on any question of general policy.

That which was far more interesting to his mind than the feeling in Austria-Hungary was the manner in which the Agreements had been received in Germany and Russia.

In the former country, where the Agreements could not be expected to be exactly popular, they had been fairly received by the official world, while the Press, without being, except in a few cases, directly hostile, had written of them in bitter-sweet language which had neither surprised nor irritated him. He had expected worse. On the other hand the tone of the Russian Press had come upon him as a most agreeable surprise. He had made up his mind to have to bear the greatest hostility and opposition, but on the contrary all the articles he had read in papers which he feared the most had, while certainly not particularly friendly, not overstepped the bounds of legitimate criticism. "Of course" he added "I had prepared the way a little, but you who have been in Russia know how little the Government can do to curb the independence of thought which is characteristic of our leading papers."

Monsieur Isvolsky added that naturally he did not anticipate that he would have an easy time during the next few months and that he had probably much criticism and hostility still to bear and to combat: nevertheless he felt greatly relieved by the attitude which the portion of the Press most opposed to his policy had adopted up to the present moment.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

⁽¹⁾ [Summaries of Press notices follow.]

No. 542.

Mr. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 95.)

Sir,

Munich, D. October 8, 1907.

R. October 10, 1907.

If one studies the German press with care one cannot help coming to the conclusion that the Anglo-Russian Agreement does not meet with the approval of the leaders of German public opinion. As regards, however, the attitude of the Imperial Government, it is perfectly correct in tone; they desire to maintain the appearance of a

rapprochement with England and they are determined to avoid doing anything which shall unfavourably affect the hearty welcome which it is expected will be extended to the Kaiser when he visits England next month. This is the reason why we find in the "Süddeutsche Reichskorrespondenz" a defence of Monsieur Iswolsky's policy and arguments used to reassure the public as to the harmlessness of this Asiatic Agreement. But the press, usually so docile to such inspiration in matters relating to foreign affairs, on the present occasion will not allow itself to be entirely persuaded and only accepts the Anglo-Russian Understanding with great reserve. It seems to me that since the publication of the text of that Agreement a regular campaign has been started in the newspapers here to criticise and belittle it; this takes the form not of a direct German attack upon the Agreement but of showing by quotations from English, French and Russian newspapers that public opinion in foreign countries condemns this Understanding. As a sample of this method I will mention an article published in a prominent place in the pages of the Munich "Neueste Nachrichten" a few days ago which professes to give the views of Prince Kotchoubey* as they have appeared in the Paris "Eclair." The chief point of the Prince's remarks as brought out in the German newspaper is that in Russian public opinion Monsieur Iswolsky's policy is considered one of timidity and that by putting his signature to the Agreement he has endorsed the renunciation of Russia's natural ambitions in Asia. He is accused of having done this, first, because he has evidently no confidence in the military power of Russia, and in the second place out of servility to the Czar as he is well aware that His Majesty and his family are imbued with Anglophile sentiments.

Some of the South German newspapers, however, do not limit themselves to quoting foreign opinions with regard to the Anglo-Russian Agreement but indulge in direct criticism of it on their own account.

Thus the Stuttgart "Schwäbische Merkur" remarks that even in England the Anglo-Russian Agreement does not meet with universal approval. These people who are well informed are fully aware that treaties, especially those with Russia, are not intended to last very long. The cause of the little confidence entertained in international political circles as to the durability of Treaties with Russia lies in the fact that the Russian Government is one of those which have little cohesion in themselves. Russia possesses administrative Departments but not a unified Administration: there are Ministers but no responsible Cabinet exists and no one can speak authoritatively in the name of the whole Government. The Minister at the head of each administrative Department recognises only the Czar as his superior and remains absolute in his own Department but outside of it he has no influence or power. Strictly speaking one can never say that "Russia" has concluded a Treaty but only that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has within his restricted powers put his signature to a document which does not in any inevitable way bind the Czar or any of the other Ministers. The Representatives of foreign countries when concluding Agreements with the Russian foreign Minister, can never feel certain that they have obtained the real assent of the Czar to such a document.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

F. CARTWRIGHT.

* A bitter Anglophobe.—C. H.

⁽¹⁾ [Summaries of Press notices follow.]

[ED. NOTE.—For the German attitude generally to the Anglo-Russian *Entente* before and after August 31, 1907, *v. G.P.* XXV, I, ch. 183.]

Sir J. Jordan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/382.

(No. 482.)

Sir,

Peking, D. October 14, 1907.

R. November 30, 1907.

In my despatch No. 470 of the 28th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I had the honour to report the communication to the Wai-wu Pu by my Russian colleague and myself of the Anglo-Russian Arrangement respecting Tibet of the 31st August last and the steps which we had taken to give effect to our instructions on the subject of the prohibition of Scientific Missions.⁽²⁾

Mr. Liang Tun yen, the Minister to whom the Draft Note inviting the co-operation of China in enforcing the prohibition and requesting a definition of the limits of Tibet was handed, called upon me in connection with other questions on the 4th instant and after leaving sent me the enclosed Memorandum with a private Note explaining that he had forgotten to deliver it personally at our interview. A copy was sent with no covering communication to my Russian Colleague on the following day.

The Memorandum, which is the Wai-wu Pu's reply to our Draft Note, states that China has not in the past permitted foreigners to travel in Tibet and that she will adhere to this course in the future. No change, it is added, has been made in the limits of Tibet and the old limits should be regarded as authoritative. The Board considers that there is no necessity for a definition of them and no need for a formal communication on the subject.

The substance of this Memorandum was communicated to you in my Telegram No. 175 of the 5th instant⁽¹⁾ and since then I have had the honour to receive your Telegrams Nos. 107 and 108⁽²⁾ in which you informed me of the exchange of views which had taken place between His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg and the Acting Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and stated that you did not propose to pursue the question further with the Chinese Government.

My Russian Colleague and I both agree that no useful purpose would be served by again approaching the Wai-wu Pu on the subject. As their reception of the recent Franco-Japanese Agreement showed, the Chinese Government are very sensitive at present in matters of this kind, and there is no reason to doubt that they will maintain in principle the policy they have pursued in the past of excluding foreign travellers from Tibet, although the weakness of their administrative control on a long and little known frontier line may render the strict enforcement of this policy a matter of extreme difficulty in practice.

I have, &c.

J. N. JORDAN.

Enclosure in No. 543.

Memorandum respecting Prohibition of Scientific Missions to Thibet.

(Translation.)

Your Excellency recently handed us the draft of a Note to the effect that Great Britain and Russia had decided to permit no scientific mission to proceed into Tibet for a period of three years without the mutual consent of both Governments, and inviting the Chinese Government also to do what lies in their power to prohibit the entry of scientific missions into Tibet for a similar period of three years; and also requesting the Imperial Government to define the limits of Tibet.

The Board has the honour to state that China has not hitherto permitted any

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced as its tenour is indicated.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

foreigners of any description whatever to travel in Tibet, and must still continue to pursue this course. As regards the limits of Tibet, the Board has further the honour to state that no change has ever been made in them, and the old limits should be regarded as authoritative. There is no necessity to send a definition of them. Nor is there any need for a Note on this subject.

No. 544.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/327.

(No. 531.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 21, 1907.

R. October 28, 1907.

Baron Motono, the Japanese Minister, called on me today after his return from a leave of absence. He had spent a few weeks in Paris and a few days at The Hague. He said he had been struck, when in Paris, at finding in certain financial circles a desire to come to a thoroughly friendly understanding with Germany, and that among other financial personages who were not so eager in that direction there was considerable uneasiness on that score. The former, he said, were principally members of large Jewish houses, while the latter, who were not of that persuasion, were afraid that in any understanding with Germany the latter Power would gain all the advantages. At the same time there was the great bulk of the French public to be considered who were not disposed to move in the direction indicated: and the unwillingness to adopt the quotation of German stocks on the Paris Bourse showed that even in the financial world the movement towards an understanding had not made great progress. He believed that in German financial circles a movement in the same direction was being advocated, and that with time it might become more active. At The Hague he had been informed that Russia had on several occasions joined hands with Germany and Austria-Hungary, and that there seemed to have been a compact between these three Powers, to oppose British proposals. This led Baron Motono to ask himself whether the future policy of Russia might not be to act cordially with the two above-mentioned Powers and whether we might not witness an evolution towards a general continental understanding to which France might gradually gravitate, and from which Great Britain might be excluded.

I told Baron Motono that, in my opinion, Monsieur Isvolsky would be very cautious in subscribing to any formal and binding engagements with Germany; and I understood indeed that he was indisposed to do so. Still I did foresee the possibility that in future Russian foreign policy, in so far as regards Europe, would be to a great extent inspired from Berlin. There were, to my mind, two facts which would hinder Monsieur Isvolsky from endeavouring at the present moment to bind himself absolutely to Berlin and Vienna. In the first place there was the French alliance, which, however irksome and indeed distasteful it might be in certain influential circles, had perforce to be maintained; and, secondly, the Russian Press, generally speaking, was opposed to identifying Russian policy either with Germany or Austria-Hungary: and the Press exercised a great influence over Monsieur Isvolsky personally. He was singularly sensitive to press criticisms. Still it was equally a fact that a close understanding with Germany and Austria Hungary had many powerful advocates: in the Court, the higher bureaucracy and possibly in some military circles. It would be interesting to see in what frame of mind Monsieur Isvolsky returned from his stay abroad, as he had had the opportunity of personally conversing with the principal sovereigns and statesmen in Europe. My impression was that we must be prepared for a cautious, but none the less decided, tendency towards very intimate relations with Berlin, and a desire to follow advice and guidance emanating from that capital. My impression was that Monsieur Isvolsky

would feel that he owed something to Berlin; and that having concluded an Agreement with Great Britain, which as he himself had told me could not be precisely pleasing to Germany, he would consider that he must now, in a sense, make amends, and while being perfectly loyal towards the French alliance and scrupulous in the execution of the Anglo-Russian Convention, he might win the favour of Germany by his action in many matters which did not directly come within the scope of the above-mentioned instruments. This would require some skill and adroitness, but to my mind M. Isvolsky was exceptionally skilful and adroit; and it would be of great interest to follow the developments of Russian diplomacy in the near future.

Baron Motono enquired whether all this might not eventually lead to what he had foreshadowed in the earlier part of the conversation, and that Great Britain might hereafter find herself isolated, which he believed was the great aim of Germany before she entered on what appeared to him the inevitable struggle with Great Britain for maritime supremacy, which as long as it remained in the hands of the latter Power blocked the way to the attainment of the ultimate goal of German world policy.

I admitted that this was quite possible: and that in the near or far future Great Britain would have to rely solely on her own unaided resources if she had to wage a struggle for commercial and maritime supremacy with Germany as in the past she had been forced to contend with Holland, Spain and France. Still as regards the immediate and narrower issues, I fully anticipated that both Germany and Austria Hungary would achieve a considerable control over the tendencies of Russian European policy; and that in this Monsieur Isvolsky would take care that no ostensible ground would be afforded to France to complain, while as regards Great Britain the settlement of matters in Central Asia need not be disturbed. As to Persia there might be some need of watchfulness on our part: as it was in that quarter that the influence of Germany on Russian policy might make itself unpleasantly felt.

I feel I should apologise for reporting the substance of a conversation with the Japanese Minister which was necessarily of an academical character; and in which I fear I have principally recorded my own observations: but as regards European affairs I think that we may witness in the near future some interesting developments of Russian policy, and I have therefore ventured to trouble you with some of my appreciations of the situation as viewed from this standpoint.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

This is a very interesting despatch partly on account of the fact that Baron Motono has never been known, since he came to St. Petersburg, to commit himself to any opinion on any important political question.

He considers that we must be prepared for a continental coalition against Great Britain and, eventually, for war with Germany.

H. N.

Oct. 28, 1907.

R. P. M.

The possibility of Great Britain's isolation before a European coalition seems to be a new idea to Baron Motono. The French Entente, the Russian rapprochement and our alliance with his own country do not appear to have impressed him!

L. M.

The possibility of our isolation in Europe is at present somewhat remote. Till five years ago our position had for sometime been one of complete isolation, and yet at our worst moments during the Boer war it was found impossible to make a combination against us. I hope the developments of Russian foreign policy in the near future may show themselves in the Near East, where it will not be easy for Russia and Germany to work together.

C. H.

Russia needs a period of recuperation and for this it is necessary for her to be on as good terms as possible with every body; she is assured of this with France by her alliance; she wants to secure it with Germany by a conciliatory policy.

It is true that we have passed safely through a period of isolation a few years ago, but we might not do so a few years hence, if the German fleet was much stronger, or at any rate our power to do so might be put to the test.

The strength of Germany's position is her power to frighten or overawe her neighbours in Europe, however well disposed they may be to us.

E. G.

No. 545

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/327.

(No. 582.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 23, 1907.

R. October 28, 1907.

His Majesty the Emperor did me the honour to receive me in private audience today at Peterhof. His Majesty at once mentioned the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention which he said had afforded him the greatest pleasure, and that he felt that it was a matter for congratulation that all differences, and possibilities of differences, between the two countries had been laid at rest. He observed that I had been obliged to pay a hasty visit to London at one stage of the negotiations, but that he quite understood that it was far better to discuss matters personally with my Government than over the telegraph wire, and that the results had proved that the step had been a wise one. I told His Majesty that I considered that both sides owed a debt to him for the sympathetic interest which he had always taken towards a satisfactory issue of the negotiations, and I could add that His Majesty the King had been much gratified that the Agreement had been reached. At certain moments I had had doubts if an Agreement would be reached but the goodwill on both sides had overcome all difficulties. We could now, I trusted, efface from the slate all likelihood of trouble between the two countries.

It was also satisfactory to note that public opinion in both countries had, generally speaking, accepted the Convention with very good grace, and I had every hope that the relations would henceforth be cordial and intimate. His Majesty said that he had been specially pleased with the reception accorded to the Convention, and that he looked forward also to the establishment of thoroughly friendly feelings.

I then mentioned to His Majesty that General Sir J. French had paid a short visit to St. Petersburg, and that he had much regretted not to have had an opportunity of presenting his respects to His Majesty; but that he had been most courteously welcomed by all the Russian Authorities who had rendered him every possible service. His Majesty said that he was sorry he had not been at St. Petersburg to receive the General, whose acquaintance he remembered to have made some years ago at Aldershot. He was pleased to hear that the General had been well received and that he had enjoyed his visit. I remarked that some absurd fantastical rumours had appeared in the papers as to General French's mission here being of a politico-military character, in connection with a military convention in regard to Persia and other wild schemes. It was needless to remark that the General had come here in a purely private capacity, and also to convey a friendly message from His Majesty the King to his Russian Dragoon Regiment. His Majesty said that he paid no attention to the ridiculous reports which appeared from time to time in the press: and he was pleased to hear that the General had seen the King's Regiment.

I told His Majesty that I had had the pleasure recently of a conversation with Monsieur Stolypin and that I had found His Excellency hopeful as to the future. So far as I could judge there was a sensible improvement in the general situation, though what could be described as simple brigandage appeared to be fairly active still. His Majesty replied that it was an undoubted fact that matters had improved, and he

considered that people were becoming weary of continued political agitation; as to the brigandage, his Government must suppress that with a stern hand, and he had impressed on Monsieur Stolypin that simple murderers and robbers must be dealt with unrelentingly. He hoped that the next Duma would act reasonably and work more than talk; and that it would succeed in passing some useful laws. His Majesty made a passing allusion to the Hague Conference, which he said had not been without some satisfactory results. He had, he confessed, not had time to read all the voluminous reports which he had received, but he would study carefully the final Act and the conventions. The conference had lasted a very long time, but its labours had not been fruitless.

The conversation then turned on matters of passing interest, and of no political character. On my taking leave of His Majesty he was pleased to say that it had given him much pleasure to receive me, as he had desired to express personally the sincere pleasure he had experienced at the successful and satisfactory termination of the negotiations.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 546.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/327.

(No. 570.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. November 14, 1907.

Sir,

R. November 25, 1907.

I called on M. Isvolsky yesterday on his return from abroad and had some conversation with him on affairs in general. His Excellency said that he feared that the situation in Persia was likely to cause some trouble: and he asked me what were my impressions. I said that it was exceedingly difficult to form any opinion as to the probable issue of the present imbroglio, as the situation appeared to change every forty-eight hours. At one time there were rumours of plots against the Shah and as to the danger of his position; and shortly afterwards His Majesty appeared to have established friendly relations with the Assembly while the press published inflammatory articles against foreigners. It was clear that there was a most troubled condition of affairs in Persia, closely resembling a state of anarchy. It seemed to me that, in these circumstances, the wisest course would be to wait and watch events, and to avoid any interference in internal affairs.

M. Isvolsky remarked that there was also the question of the Turco-Persian frontier,⁽¹⁾ and he thought that this was a difficult problem, as if the Russian and British Governments made no serious efforts to procure the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from Persian territory it might appear to the Persians that the integrity of their country was not in reality a matter of great interest to the two Powers, although it had been formally mentioned in the Convention.

I replied that this might doubtless be the case, and I believed that my Government were quite alive to the necessity of intervening seriously in the question, but there was some doubt whether the present moment was a favourable one. The two Ambassadors at Constantinople considered that the time had not yet arrived for approaching the Sublime Porte, and my Government were awaiting the views of the Russian Government on the subject. His Excellency said that he expected to hear from M. Zinoviev very shortly, and would let me know as soon as possible the opinion of the Russian Government. The Sublime Porte might refuse to admit even the presence of the Consuls at the meetings of the Commission—and what then? I said that, in my opinion, it might be well to first allow the Commission an opportunity of dealing with the frontier—the results would in all probability be nil: and then the two Governments

(¹) [*cp. supra*, pp. 510–1, No. 464.]

might demand that Delegates from both Powers should assist in demarcating a frontier. It could hardly be admitted that if such a demand were made that the two Governments should accept a refusal, and the matter would have to be seen through. But I could not imagine that a combined request from Russia and Great Britain could be refused by the Porte: it would be strange were such to be the case. However, these were only my personal views, and it was a matter outside of my province.

M. Isvolsky turned to other subjects: and said that he had been highly gratified with the gracious reception accorded to him by the King and he had had a most interesting and instructive conversation with His Majesty. He had also had opportunities of conversing with Baron d'Aehrenthal, and of course their interviews had been largely occupied with Macedonia. He himself had not been in favour of the Joint Note in respect to Macedonia,⁽²⁾ as he did not anticipate that it would lead to any satisfactory results; and he thought that his doubts had been justified, as the activity of the bands seemed to be in no wise diminished. The project for judicial reforms was being discussed by the Ambassadors, and the next step would be to present it to the Porte, who would probably meet it with a point-blank refusal. It would then be necessary to decide on the course to be followed.

His Excellency then passed to the Anglo-Russian Convention, and remarked that he had been pleased to observe that, on the whole, it had been very favourably received by the Press and both countries. There were one or two discordant notes, but the reception had been far better than he had anticipated. "It is however, impossible to deny" he continued, "that the Convention is by no means welcome to Germany and we must both expect to see her cause us trouble." I enquired if he alluded to Persia. "Not only in Persia" he replied "but everywhere. Prince Bülow gave me positive assurances at Swinemünde that Germany would assist Russia and Austria as regards Macedonia, but as soon as the German Government were in possession of the Draft project of Judicial Reforms, they communicated it to the Sublime Porte. This does not look like friendly co-operation. I have good information that the German Government took this course, and Baron d'Aehrenthal was also similarly informed: and though he is more German than the Germans he was much vexed and displeased." As to Persia M. Isvolsky enquired what in my opinion would be the form that German activity would take in that country. I said that owing to the financial crisis throughout Europe I doubted if Germany would be in a position to develop much activity in the financial direction: and if we could secure shortly the appointment of the French Financial Adviser we might be able to block, in great measure, the expansion of her influence in the finances of Persia. But it was possible that owing to her influence at Constantinople, Germany might be able to render Persia services in respect to the frontier question and this would give her a good position at Tehran.

M. Isvolsky said that M. Stemrich, the late Minister at Tehran was now appointed Under Secretary at Berlin, and would be able to assist in directing a Persian policy from there. We must both be prepared for an active policy. He added that he had seen M. de Schoen at Munich, and had found him much pleased, but a little oppressed, at his new appointment. He considered that M. de Schoen had not an easy task before him, as he had not only to deal with Prince Bülow, but in the background was M. de Holstein, who though nominally retired, was still apparently in the confidence and in intimate daily relations with the Chancellor.

M. Isvolsky said that he had been well satisfied with his visit to Paris: and had some interesting conversations with M. Clemenceau, who had assured him that France would shape her policy in Morocco so as to give rise to no international difficulties, and that she would keep as closely as possible to the Algeciras Act.

In regard to internal affairs, M. Isvolsky said that he anticipated that M. Stolypin would have considerable trouble with the Extreme Right, who though perhaps not numerically very strong in the Duma were powerful outside and had influential support. I would remember that at the close of the last Duma a very determined

(2) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 111, and p. 215, No. 169.]

effort had been made to remove M. Stolypin from office, and that "les grands moyens" had to be employed to enable him to retain his position. There were signs that these efforts would be renewed, and he sincerely trusted that they would be defeated. It was far too early to predict how the Duma would act or what would be the development of the situation: and he himself had only been a few hours in St. Petersburg and had seen but very few people and was consequently unable to form an opinion.

M. Isvolsky's return had been delayed some days owing to a severe indisposition, but he was looking well and ready for work. He has not yet seen the Emperor.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 547.

Count Benckendorff to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

Chesham House, Chesham Place, S.W.,

December 25, 1907.

I just received the following telegram from M. Isvolsky:—

Je vous prie d'exprimer à Sir Edward Grey la satisfaction avec laquelle nous avons pris connaissance de son discours à Berwick, notamment des termes dans lesquels il a parlé de la Convention Russe-Anglaise et l'heureuse influence que cet acte a exercé sur les relations entre l'Angleterre et la Russie.

I received through Sir Charles Hardinge your kind message concerning the report in the Times. You see that the impression made by your speech on my Gov[ernmen]t, even as it has been reported, has been excellent. I never doubted it would be so.

Let me add only a few words, quite privately—my personal latest impressions. I don't know whether you noticed the account given in the Times telegrams of the comments in the Russian press concerning our common action in Persia. However deplorable and dangerous this sudden crisis still may remain, I believe it has done more for consolidating our Convention in the minds of the Russian public, than could ever have been expected in so short a time. The press, at least in these questions is entirely free. Unexperienced as they still may be and are, they feel more than they think. I cannot say that I am sorry for it in this instance. When recollecting what it used to be two or three years ago, it seems a dream. But it is not a dream. I feel that stronger than ever.

Excuse me to have troubled you in your holiday and let me add my best wishes for Xmas.

Yours v[ery] sincerely,
BENCKENDORFF.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 33.]

No. 548.

Extract from Annual Report for Russia for the Year 1907.

(Enclosure in Despatch No. 57 from Sir A. Nicolson, D. January 29, 1908,
R. February 3, 1908.)

F.O. 3643/3643/09/38.

(C.)—Germany.

37. In August of this year the Emperor of Russia met the German Emperor at Swinemünde,⁽¹⁾ and M. Isvolsky and Prince Bülow accompanied their respective

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 297, No. 277, note, and G.P., XXII, pp. 67–72.]

Sovereigns. This Embassy has no information as to what passed at this interview, beyond the fact that the opportunity was taken of explaining to Prince Bülow that the Anglo-Russian Convention, then in course of negotiation, contained no provisions affecting German interests, and that the German Chancellor expressed his satisfaction that the two countries were likely to come to an understanding which would remove causes of friction between them in Central Asia. Reports have been current that the Baltic and the Polish questions were discussed at the meeting, either between the two Sovereigns themselves or between their two Ministers. Although the intimacy between the two Courts may remain on their old intimate footing, and although the Russian Foreign Minister may feel compelled to proceed with great caution and circumspection in all his foreign transactions from the fear of offending the susceptibilities of Germany, occasions have arisen, and will probably continue to arise, on which the policy of the two Governments diverge or clash. Moreover, the Russian press in general is hostile to Germany, and would object to any intimate intercourse. There is a feeling of mistrust of German diplomacy and policy, and it is thought that friendship with Germany soon lapses into vassalage, and that a considerable price has to be paid to enjoy even that rather invidious position. Both in the Near and the Middle East the policies of the two countries necessarily are not in unison. As regards the Middle East, there are two points in German policy which cause considerable perturbation to the Russian Chancellerie. Notwithstanding assurances on the part of the Berlin Cabinet, the Russian Government are hampered with the fear that Germany will seek, and may possibly succeed in acquiring, a strong position at Tehran; and that, if she wins the confidence of whatever authority may eventually obtain the reins of power in that distracted country, she may become the recipient of many favours and privileges, and play at Tehran the part which she has assumed at Constantinople. Furthermore, the Bagdad Railway affords cause for much uneasiness at St. Petersburg; but this question will be treated under a separate heading. It may also be mentioned that the St. Petersburg Chancellerie has shrewd suspicions that the action of Turkey on the Turco-Persian frontier is, if not directly inspired, at least benevolently regarded by the German Government. In regard to the Near East, the aspirations of Russia for a free exit from and entry into the Black Sea, though perhaps they are not so actual as they were some years back, still naturally exist in the minds of Russian statesmen, and they are well aware that if ever the time should arrive when the realization of these hopes was near completion the opposition of Turkey would receive support from Germany. In the question of Macedonia, in which it may be said that Russia is more liberally inclined and readier to take an active line than her colleague Austria-Hungary, it is considered that it will probably be Germany who will introduce a rift into the European concert when the time comes for exercising the necessary pressure on the Sublime Porte.

38. The above in brief are some of the points on which the policy and aims of the two Governments are divergent. But the situation is other when the survey is transferred to the European field. In this direction there is a desire on the part of the Russian Government to live on the best possible terms with Germany. In the first place it is considered that the value of France as an ally has largely diminished of recent years. There is a generally received opinion that both her naval and military forces are much weakened by sedition and insubordination, and that they would be of no great value in case of war. On the other hand, the power of Germany both on land and on sea is regarded with perhaps an exaggerated admiration, and it is therefore considered prudent to live on friendly relations with so powerful a neighbour. Moreover, the present tendency of those directing or influencing the foreign affairs of Russia is to do what is possible to avoid offending the susceptibilities of Germany, and it should be noted that with this object there is a wish to offer some solatium to Germany as compensation for the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention. The impression exists in the Russian Foreign Office that the Convention was not agreeable to Germany, and that, though she had no

plausible grounds for objecting to it, she still views it with disfavour, whatever may be the public utterances of her statesmen in regard to it. In fact, the Russian Foreign Minister has on more than one occasion stated that Germany will cause as much trouble as she safely can in disturbing the relations between Russia and Great Britain and in hampering the smooth execution of the Convention. The reported action of German Agents in Persia and the interpretation which was given by M. de Schön to what is asserted here were merely preparatory discussions as to the Bagdad Railway are cited as but the prelude to what may be expected later. It is in order to anticipate and to prevent, as far as possible, a development of an obstructive or inconvenient action on the part of Germany in the Middle and Near East that M. Isvolsky seeks to placate her elsewhere in matters which are not of vital importance to Russian interests. He is credited with having adopted a friendly, some say a subservient, attitude to Germany at the Peace Conference, and he is discussing with her *tête-à-tête* how matters may be arranged with Sweden as to the Baltic. He was strenuously opposed, as has been already mentioned, to extending, in however so small a degree, the scope of certain portions of the Anglo-Russian Convention; and, both as regards Crete and in a certain measure with respect to Macedonia, he has been anxious to adapt himself, as far as possible, with the views and wishes of Austria-Hungary, which action, he is aware, would produce an agreeable impression in Berlin. The line which probably the Russian Government are endeavouring to follow is, while maintaining the alliance with France, and promoting and developing the friendly relations with Great Britain, to sail in company with Germany and to render her such friendly services as are possible. Such a line would require some skill and adroitness to pursue for any length of time, and it is doubtful if it will be found a feasible one. It is possible that events will occur in the Near and Middle East which will accentuate the divergencies between Russian and German policy, and that gradually Russia will be brought to see that the Power which will cross her path in those quarters of the globe will not be Great Britain as of yore. It would, in these circumstances, be difficult to follow a double policy—on the one hand cordial intercourse in Europe, and on the other rivalry and opposition in Asia. This would be an impossible situation; and it is possible that the trend of events will lead to more and more intimate relations with Great Britain rather than to an increase of cordiality with Germany. When Russia has strengthened herself and has reorganized her forces, and has, in general, resumed that place in the European council to which she is entitled, her solicitude for the good favour of her western neighbour will not perhaps be so anxious and so marked. It would not be fair to assume that the present Russian Foreign Minister is dependent upon, and chiefly guided by, the inspiration which he may receive from Berlin. At one time this appeared to be the case, and in many quarters the impression existed that the Foreign Office on the Neva was as much influenced from Berlin as is the Ministry in Vienna. It would seem to be juster to state that M. Isvolsky is simply striving to keep on the best possible terms with Germany. The circumstances of the moment almost compel him to adopt this course; but he has shown on more than one occasion that this desire does not necessarily lead him to cede any of the independence which a Russian Foreign Minister should properly retain. If the case should ever arise in which it would be necessary for him to choose between subserviency to Germany and an assertion of the maintenance of Russian interests, there is little doubt that he would choose the latter, and in this he would be cordially supported by his compatriots.

(D).—*Austria-Hungary.*

39. The relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary are harmonious and friendly, and though there were occasionally slight divergencies of opinion over certain points in the Macedonian programme, they have not been permitted to introduce any discord between the two Governments. M. Isvolsky has had audiences of the Emperor Francis Joseph and interviews with Baron d'Aehrenthal,

and the two Governments appear to have decided to steer clear of any questions on which they do not see eye to eye. These questions exist, and in all probability will continue to exist, but for the present they are by tacit mutual consent permitted to lie dormant unless circumstances over which neither Government practically has control brings them to the surface. In the Macedonian question M. Isvolsky was not in favour of the joint note to the Balkan States, which chiefly concerned itself with the activity of the bands. He thought that its effect might be contrary to what was hoped, and his anticipation and fears seem to have been justified. He, however, gave way to the wishes of his Austrian colleague, as he also did on several points, it is surmised, in the question of reforms. In short, M. Isvolsky's inner views are, it may be gathered, rather in harmony with those of the London Cabinet than with those prevailing in Vienna. He, however, considers it prudent and safer to go as far as possible in conjunction with Vienna, and to endeavour to preserve an identity of action. This was doubtless a statesmanlike view, but if the occasion should arise for putting pressure on the Sublime Porte in order to induce the Ottoman Government to carry into execution the reforms on which the Powers have decided, it may be expected that Russia will willingly associate herself in any measures which the more liberal Powers may consider to be necessary. At the same time, as in the case of Germany, so in the case of Austria-Hungary, M. Isvolsky is desirous generally to be in close relations with the Government at Vienna. In less essential matters, such as Crete, in which Russian interests are comparatively slight, M. Isvolsky would be willing to lend a ready ear to Austrian wishes. It has occasionally been rumoured that there has been a desire to revive a three Emperors' alliance, and some have gone so far as to assume that some steps have been taken in that direction. So serious a departure in the foreign policy of Russia is not probable, in any case for the present, and it may be said that so long as M. Isvolsky remains at the head of foreign affairs it will not be accomplished or even premeditated. He is perfectly well aware that in the first place it would be an unpopular event among the great bulk of Russian public opinion, and that in the second place the present is not the moment for Russia to embark on any engagements of such a nature which would lead to a complete reversal of her existing political relations. The project may be dismissed as visionary.

No. 549.

Memorandum respecting the Anglo-Russian Convention.⁽¹⁾

Persia.

Confidential. (9130.)

Foreign Office, January 29, 1908.

The limits of the British sphere of influence in Persia as defined by Article II⁽²⁾ were inspired by the desire of His Majesty's Government to secure their really vital interest in the safeguarding of the strategical position on the Indian frontier. This was indicated by the late Government in 1903 as a triangle of territory including Seistan, Kerman, and Bunder Abbas so as to render it impossible to construct a Russian railway to Bunder Abbas or any port east of that place, the Admiralty considering that, with our practical possession of the Mussendim promontory, all danger from a Russian port in the Persian Gulf would be obviated. It was held that, if the Government of India could obtain this and nothing more by the payment of 500,000*l.* to the Persian Government, a good bargain would have been made, as it might save India from largely increased naval contributions and military expenditure in the future. This view was accepted by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon.

⁽¹⁾ [This memorandum was prepared in the Foreign Office, but the writer cannot be traced.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 503, No. 456, *encl.*]

The recognition by Persia of the British sphere of influence in South-East Persia would have had no binding effect upon Russia, but the Russian Government have now formally recognized this sphere of influence, and no payment in money has been made for it.

The creation of a Russian and British sphere of influence is in reality only a self-denying Ordinance, by which each Government pledge themselves not to seek for concessions in the other's sphere. Other Powers are at liberty, as formerly, to seek concessions all over Persia, and British trade will be carried on in the Russian and neutral zones on the same terms as hitherto and as the trade of other foreign countries, the sole restriction on British enterprise being that British concessions cannot be sought in the Russian zone.

It may be observed that although Great Britain has occupied a predominant position in Southern Persia for more than 100 years, British trade and enterprise have so far failed to obtain any permanent results beyond a concession for the navigation of the Karun, the construction of a road from Ahwaz to Ispahan and Tehran, and certain telegraph lines. The continuance of these concessions is guaranteed by the Treaty.

As regards the trade routes in Persia, an all-British route exists from Ahwaz to Tehran, and British trade on the Bushire-Tehran and Khanikin-Tehran routes will be subjected in the future to the same treatment as hitherto.

The limits of the Russian zone were defined by the Russian Government, and there are no British concessions within those limits which have not been safeguarded.

The line of the British zone from Birjand was not drawn to the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers, since it was realized that such a line could have no possible effect on a possible Russian movement towards Afghanistan, but care was taken, during the negotiations, that none of the western frontier of Afghanistan should come within the Russian zone.

The Imperial Bank of Persia have informed the Foreign Office of their great satisfaction at the terms of the Agreement relating to Persia.

Afghanistan.

We have now for the first time obtained from Russia, in writing and in the form of a definite Treaty engagement,⁽³⁾ assurances on the following three points, which had hitherto been only verbal and, as the Russian Government stated, not binding indefinitely upon them:—

1. That the Russian Government consider Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence.
2. That all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government.
3. That they will not send any Agents into Afghanistan.

The absence in Article II of a corresponding engagement on the part of Russia not to annex or occupy any portion of Afghanistan is covered by the declaration in Article I on the part of the Russian Government that Afghanistan is outside the sphere of Russian influence.

The principle of direct relations to be established between the Russian and Afghan authorities for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character was conceded by the late Government in 1908, and the Russian Ambassador was so informed. It was also included in the draft proposals for an Anglo-Russian Agreement submitted by Lord Lansdowne to the Russian Ambassador in November 1908.

⁽³⁾ [The text of the Afghan Convention is printed, *supra*, pp. 541-4, No. 483, and *infra* p. 619, Appendix I.]

Commercial agents cannot be appointed in Afghanistan without previous agreement between the British and Russian Governments, and without due regard to the Ameer's sovereign rights.

The [need of the] consent of the Ameer to an Agreement relating to Afghanistan was recognized by the late Government, since in the proposals submitted by Lord Lansdowne to the Russian Ambassador the following sentence occurs:—

“It will be necessary that His Majesty's Government should obtain the approval of the Ameer of Afghanistan before any Arrangement dealing with this question is concluded.”

Moreover, the Ameer is bound to follow our advice in his foreign relations. To have consulted him about the questions of direct communication and commercial arrangements before signing the Agreement with Russia would have made him a third party to the negotiations. To have omitted Article V would have involved allowing the Russian Government at once to give effect to the arrangements as to frontier communications and trade, but this would have been impossible without the Ameer's consent.

The dilemma was to get the Ameer's consent before or after signature. It was decided for the above reasons to get it after signature. We have no reason to doubt that the Ameer will give his consent. He was on tour when the Treaty was signed. He wrote on the 29th September that he could not deal with so important a subject until he was back at his capital. This attitude was reasonable. He returned to Cabul on the 25th November. In view of the time which Orientals take over correspondence, and the importance of the subject, which necessitated consultation with his advisers, it is no matter of surprise that he has not yet replied.

Thibet.

The provisions of the Agreement relating to Thibet⁽⁴⁾ do not go beyond the assurances given in 1904 by Lord Lansdowne to the Russian Ambassador.

The position is that, in return for agreeing to embody the assurances of the late Government in a formal document, we have obtained similar assurances from Russia; and that in addition, we actually get formal Russian consent to the maintenance of a preferential position for Great Britain in Thibet over all other foreign countries in regard to frontier and commercial matters.

On the 10th May, 1904,⁽⁵⁾ Lord Lansdowne informed Count Benckendorff that, in return for the adhesion of the Russian Government to the Khedivial Decrees, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to give to the Russian Government an assurance to the following effect:—

His Majesty's Government still adhere to the policy laid down in their telegram of the 6th November to the Government of India,⁽⁶⁾ i.e., that they do not contemplate any annexation of Thibetan territory, nor the establishment of a permanent Mission at Lhasa. At the same time His Majesty's Government cannot undertake not to depart in any eventuality from the policy which now commends itself to them.

On the 2nd June, 1904,⁽⁷⁾ the following written communication was made to Count Benckendorff:—

“Your Excellency has inquired, in the course of recent conversation, whether the opposition which has been offered to the British Mission to Thibet has in any way modified the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to that country, as described in their telegram to the Government of India of the 6th November, 1903.

⁽⁴⁾ [The text of the arrangement concerning Thibet is printed, *supra*, pp. 352-4, No. 317, and *infra*, p. 620.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 307-9, No. 291.]

⁽⁶⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 305, *Ed. note.*]

⁽⁷⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 310, No. 293.]

His Majesty's Government announced in that telegram that, in sanctioning the advance of Colonel Younghusband's Mission to Gyantse, they were clearly of opinion that this step should not be allowed to lead to the occupation of Thibet, or to permanent intervention in Thibetan affairs. They stated that the advance was to be made for the sole purpose of obtaining satisfaction, and that, as soon as reparation had been obtained, withdrawal would be effected. *They added that they were not prepared to establish a permanent Mission in Thibet, and that the question of enforcing trade facilities in that country was to be considered in the light of the decision conveyed in the telegram.*

"I am now able to tell you that His Majesty's Government still adhere to the policy thus described, though it is obvious that their action must to some extent depend upon the conduct of the Thibetans themselves, and that His Majesty's Government cannot undertake that they will not depart in any eventuality from the policy which now commends itself to them. They desire, however, to state in the most emphatic terms that, *so long as no other Power endeavours to intervene in the affairs of Thibet, they will not attempt either to annex it, to establish a Protectorate over it, or in any way to control its internal administration.*"

To take one by one the Articles likely to be criticised.

Article II.—"It is clearly understood that Buddhists, subjects of Great Britain or of Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and the other representatives of Buddhism in Thibet; the Governments of Great Britain and Russia engage, so far as they are concerned, not to allow those relations to infringe the stipulations of the present Agreement."

From time immemorial relations have existed between the Russian Buriats and the Buddhist authorities at Lhasa. During the negotiation of this Convention the Russian Government laid stress upon the importance of the spiritual relations between the Buriats and Lhasa being maintained and recognized. As it would have been impossible to prevent pilgrimages to Lhasa, and communications between the Buriats and the Representatives of Buddhism in Thibet, such relations have now been put on a recognized footing with every possible safeguard against their developing into political intrigues.

Article III.—"The British and Russian Governments respectively engage not to send Representatives to Lhasa."

In this His Majesty's Government have only embodied in a more formal document the engagement already taken towards Russia in June 1904 by their predecessors. In return for this we have obtained an engagement on the part of the Russian Government that they will not send a Representative to Lhasa.

His Majesty's Government, in a despatch to the Government of India dated December 1904, had already declared the right of access to Lhasa as inconsistent with their policy.

Article IV.—"The two High Contracting Parties engage neither to seek nor to obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any Concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, and mines, or other rights in Thibet."

By Article IX of the Anglo-Thibetan Convention of the 7th September, 1904,⁽⁸⁾ it stated that—

"The Government of Thibet engages that, without the previous consent of the British Government, no Concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining, or other rights, shall be granted to any foreign Power, or to the subject of any foreign Power. In the event of consent to such Concessions being granted, similar or equivalent Concessions shall be granted to the British Government."

In the subsequent Convention with China⁽⁹⁾ (Article III) it was expressly stated that no Concession was to be given to any foreigners (apart from Chinese). We have therefore only extended to Russia an undertaking to which we had already bound ourselves by an international instrument as well as by a verbal promise to Russia, for on 27th September, 1904,⁽¹⁰⁾ Lord Lansdowne, in the course of a

(8) [*v. supra*, pp. 314-7, No. 298.]

(9) [*v. supra*, pp. 324-5, No. 305, *encl. 1.*]

(10) [*v. supra*, pp. 319-20, No. 301.]

conversation with the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, observed: "Article IX, as I understood it, was a kind of self-denying Ordinance which affected ourselves as well as other Powers. We had no desire to annex Thibetan territory or to intervene in Thibetan affairs, or to have political Representatives in the country, but it must be clearly understood that other Powers were to be placed under a similar disability."

With regard to the Anglo-Russian Convention as a whole, it may be generally stated that it has successfully removed causes of friction between Great Britain and Russia in Asia, and has enabled the two Powers to co-operate usefully together in Persia in maintaining a peaceful policy which it would quite recently have been difficult to secure had no such Convention existed. The removal of all causes of discord in Asia will no doubt contribute to more harmonious relations between the two Powers in Europe.

No. 550.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1908.

I am quite satisfied with the way in which our Russian Agreement has been received.

The official Opposition here, at any rate Lord Lansdowne and Brodrick, were perfectly fair, and I regarded their speeches as summing up in favour of the Convention, though they made criticisms. Balfour was more critical, but on the other hand he laid stress on what we had gained as regards Seistan.

It may not have been very wise, I did not feel it at all desirable, as regards Russian opinion to emphasise this point in public; but, after the attacks of Curzon and Percy, it was absolutely necessary to put the case for the Convention strongly.

The Russians ought, however, to understand that everything will depend upon the spirit which they show, and it is most important that public opinion here should be favourably impressed by the attitude of the Russians towards us during the next year or two.

People here do not think that the Convention, as an isolated bargain, is a good one; but they will be pleased if it leads to a generally friendly attitude of Russia towards us. Hoping and expecting this, they have cordially approved of the Convention, and Russia must be careful not to disappoint them.

I do not agree with that, even as an isolated bargain, the Convention is a bad one, because any one behind the scenes knows that what we have gained strategically is real, while the apparent sacrifices we have made commercially are not real.

I am concerned to hear that the Russians are going to refuse to go to Arbitration about the "Knight Commander."

If they do refuse, the effect will be very bad.

It is not as if we were asking them to concede our claims; all we are asking is that they should agree to refer our claims to Arbitration. A refusal to arbitrate would be taken here as showing a stiff and unfriendly spirit. And I really think that the Russians should allow all these shipping cases which are in dispute to go to Arbitration.

I have spoken to Benckendorff in this sense already.

We must go carefully in the Macedonian Question.

I am quite pleased, from the point of view of general policy, that events are bringing Russia and us together. But a combination of Britain, Russia, and France in the Concert must for the present be a weak one. France has her hands full in

(1) [Carnock MSS.]

Morocco, and is naturally reluctant to run the risk of even diplomatic friction in connection with any other matter which might re-act unfavourably on her in Morocco. Russia is weak after the war, and her internal affairs are anything but secure.

Ten years hence, a combination of Britain, Russia, and France may be able to dominate Near Eastern policy; and within that time events will probably make it more and more clear that it is to the interest of Russia and us to work together: but we must go slowly.

I am anxious about the reports that re-actionary policy may get the upper hand in Russia. If Finland is badly treated, or if there are any more "pogroms," public opinion here will be very adversely affected, and make it quite impossible for the King to arrange a meeting with Tsar, (a meeting which I should like, but which I hardly dare suggest while the prospects of Russian internal policy are so ominous).

Of course, I do not mean that the internal policy of Russia will affect the policy of the Foreign Office here; but if it adversely affects public opinion here, then unfavourable expressions will be uttered in Parliament and elsewhere; every sign that we and Russia are working together will lead to expressions of dissatisfaction instead of being welcomed, and such a state of things would necessarily re-act very badly upon the disposition of the Russian Government towards us.

Yours sincerely,
E. GRFY.

APPENDIX I.

FULL TEXT OF CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND RUSSIA
RELATING TO PERSIA, AFGHANISTAN, AND THIBET, SIGNED AT
ST. PETERSBURGH, AUGUST 31, 1907.

Convention.

Sa Majesté le Roi du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande et des Territoires Britanniques au delà des mers, Empereur des Indes, et Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, animés du sincère désir de régler d'un consentement mutuel différentes questions touchant aux intérêts de Leurs Etats sur le continent Asiatique, ont résolu de conclure des accords destinés à prévenir toute cause de malentendus entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie par rapport aux dites questions et ont nommé à cet effet pour Leurs Plénipotentiaires respectifs—savoir :

Sa Majesté le Roi du Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande et des Territoires Britanniques au delà des mers, Empereur des Indes :

le Très Honorable Sir Authur Nicolson, son Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire près Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies :

le maître de sa Cour Alexandre Iswolsky, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, lesquels, après s'être communiqué leurs pleins pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus de ce qui suit :

Arrangement concernant la Perse.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse et désirant sincèrement la préservation de l'ordre dans toute l'étendue de ce pays et son développement pacifique, aussi bien que l'établissement permanent d'avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les autres nations;

considérant que chacun d'eux a, pour des raisons d'ordre géographique et économique, un intérêt spécial au maintien de la paix et de l'ordre dans certaines provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière Russe, d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Beloudjistan, de l'autre; et étant désireux d'éviter tout motif de conflit entre leurs intérêts respectifs dans les provinces persanes dont il a été fait mention plus haut;

se sont mis d'accord sur les termes suivants :

I.

La Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets britanniques, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemins de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance etc.—au delà d'une ligne allant de Kasri-Chirin par Isfahan, Jezd, Khakh et aboutissant à un point sur la frontière Persane à l'intersection des frontières Russe et Afghane, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Russe. Il est bien entendu que les localités mentionnées ci-dessus entrent dans la région où la Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher les susdites concessions.

II.

La Russie de son côté s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets russes, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale, telles que les concessions de chemins de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance etc.—au delà d'une ligne allant de la frontière Afghane par Gazik, Birdjand, Kerman et aboutissant à Bender-Abbas, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Britannique. Il est bien entendu que les localités mentionnées ci-dessus entrent dans la région où la Russie s'engage à ne pas rechercher les susdites concessions.

III.

La Russie s'engage pour sa part à ne pas s'opposer, sans s'être préalablement entendue avec l'Angleterre, à ce que des concessions quelconques soient données à des sujets britanniques dans les régions de la Perse situées entre les lignes mentionnées dans les articles I et II.

La Grande Bretagne prend un engagement identique en ce qui concerne des concessions à donner à des sujets russes dans les mêmes régions de la Perse.

Toutes les concessions existant actuellement dans les régions désignées dans les articles I et II sont maintenues.

IV.

Il est entendu que les revenus de toutes les douanes persanes, à l'exception de celles du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, revenus garantissant l'amortissement et les intérêts des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement, seront affectés au même but que par le passé.

Il est également entendu que les revenus des douanes persanes du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, aussi bien que ceux des pêcheries sur le littoral persan de la mer Caspienne et ceux des Postes et Télégraphes seront affectés comme par le passé au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah à la Banque Impériale de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement.

V.

En cas d'irrégularités dans l'amortissement ou le paiement des % % des emprunts persans conclus à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse et à la Banque Impériale de Perse jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent arrangement, et si la nécessité se présente pour la Russie d'instituer un contrôle sur des sources de revenus garantissant le service régulier des emprunts conclus à la première des dites Banques et situées dans la région mentionnée dans l'article II du présent arrangement, ou pour la Grande Bretagne d'instituer un contrôle sur des sources de revenus garantissant le service régulier des emprunts conclus à la seconde des dites Banques et situées dans la région mentionnée dans l'article I du présent arrangement, les Gouvernements Anglais et Russe s'engagent à entrer préalablement dans un échange d'idées amical en vue de déterminer d'un commun accord les mesures de contrôle en question et d'éviter toute ingérence qui ne serait pas conforme aux principes servant de base au présent arrangement.

Convention concernant l'Afghanistan.

Les Hautes Parties Contractantes, en vue d'assurer la parfaite sécurité sur les frontières respectives en Asie Centrale et le maintien dans ces régions d'une paix solide et durable, ont conclu la convention suivante :

ARTICLE I.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique déclare qu'il n'a pas l'intention de changer l'état politique de l'Afghanistan.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique s'engage en outre à exercer son influence en Afghanistan seulement dans un sens pacifique et il ne prendra pas lui même en Afghanistan et n'encouragera pas l'Afghanistan à prendre des mesures menaçant la Russie.

De son côté, le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie déclare qu'il reconnaît l'Afghanistan comme se trouvant en dehors de la sphère de l'influence russe, et il s'engage à se servir pour toutes ses relations politiques avec l'Afghanistan de l'intermédiaire du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique; il s'engage aussi à n'envoyer aucuns Agents en Afghanistan.

ARTICLE II.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ayant déclaré dans le traité signé à Kaboul le 21 Mars 1905 qu'il reconnaît l'arrangement et les engagements conclus avec le défunt Emir Abdur Rahman et qu'il n'a aucune intention de s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure du territoire Afghan, la Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas annexer ou occuper, contrairement au dit traité, une partie quelconque de l'Afghanistan, ni à s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure de ce pays, sous réserve que l'Emir remplira les engagements déjà contractés par lui à l'égard du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique en vertu du traité susmentionné.

ARTICLE III.

Les autorités Russes et Afghanes, spécialement désignées à cet effet, sur la frontière ou dans les provinces frontières, pourront établir des relations directes réciproques pour régler les questions locales d'un caractère non politique.

ARTICLE IV.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie déclarent reconnaître, par rapport à l'Afghanistan, le principe de l'égalité de traitement pour ce qui concerne le commerce et conviennent que toutes les facilités qui ont été ou seront acquises à l'avenir au commerce et aux commerçants anglais et anglo-indiens, seront également appliquées au commerce et aux commerçants russes. Si le développement du commerce vient à démontrer la nécessité d'agents commerciaux, les deux Gouvernements s'entendront sur les mesures à prendre, eu égard bien entendu aux droits souverains de l'Emir.

ARTICLE V.

Les présents arrangements n'entreront en vigueur qu'à partir du moment où le Gouvernement Britannique aura notifié au Gouvernement de Russie le consentement de l'Emir aux termes ci-dessus stipulés.

Arrangement concernant le Thibet.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie, reconnaissant les droits suzerains de la Chine sur le Thibet et considérant que par suite de sa situation géographique la Grande Bretagne a un intérêt spécial à voir le régime actuel des relations extérieures du Thibet intégralement maintenu, sont convenus de l'arrangement suivant :

ARTICLE I.

Les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes s'engagent à respecter l'intégrité territoriale du Thibet et à s'abstenir de toute ingérence dans son administration intérieure.

ARTICLE II.

Se conformant au principe admis de la suzeraineté de la Chine sur le Thibet, la Grande Bretagne et la Russie s'engagent à ne traiter avec le Thibet que par l'entremise du Gouvernement Chinois. Cet engagement n'exclut pas toutefois les rapports directs des agents commerciaux anglais avec les autorités thibétaines prévus par l'article V de la convention du 7 septembre 1904 entre la Grande Bretagne et le Thibet et confirmés par la convention du 27 Avril 1906 entre la Grande Bretagne et la Chine; il ne modifie pas non plus les engagements assumés par la Grande Bretagne et la Chine en vertu de l'article I de ladite convention de 1906.

Il est bien entendu que les bouddhistes tant sujets britanniques que russes peuvent entrer en relations directes sur le terrain strictement religieux avec le Dalai-Lama et les autres représentants du bouddhisme au Thibet; les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie s'engagent, pour autant qu'il dépendra d'eux, à ne pas admettre que ces relations puissent porter atteinte aux stipulations du présent arrangement.

ARTICLE III.

Les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe s'engagent, chacun pour sa part, à ne pas envoyer de Représentants à Lhassa.

ARTICLE IV.

Les deux Hautes Parties s'engagent à ne rechercher ou obtenir, ni pour leur propre compte, ni en faveur de leurs sujets, aucunes concessions de chemins de fer, routes, télégraphes et mines, ou autres droits au Thibet.

ARTICLE V.

Les deux Gouvernements sont d'accord qu'aucune partie des revenus du Thibet, soit en nature, soit en espèces, ne peut être engagée ou assignée tant à la Grande Bretagne et à la Russie qu'à leurs sujets.

Annexe à l'arrangement entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie concernant le Thibet.

La Grande Bretagne réaffirme la déclaration signée par Son Excellence le Vice-Roi et Gouverneur Général des Indes et annexée à la ratification de la convention du 7 septembre 1904, stipulant que l'occupation de la vallée de Chumbi par les forces britanniques prendra fin après le paiement de trois annuités de l'indemnité de 25.00.000 roupies, à condition que les places de marché mentionnées dans l'article II de la dite convention aient été effectivement ouvertes depuis trois ans et que les autorités thibétaines durant cette période se soient conformées strictement sous tous les rapports aux termes de ladite convention de 1904. Il est bien entendu que si l'occupation de la vallée du Chumbi par les forces britanniques n'aura pas pris fin, pour quelque raison que ce soit, à l'époque prévue par la déclaration précitée, les Gouvernements Britannique et Russe entreront dans un échange de vues amical à ce sujet.

La présente convention sera ratifiée et les ratifications en seront échangées à St. Pétersbourg aussitôt que faire se pourra.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé la présente convention et y ont apposé leurs cachets.

Fait à St. Pétersbourg, en double expédition, le 18/31 Août 1907.

A. NICOLSON.
(L.S.)

ISWOLSKY.
(L.S.)

SKETCH MAP OF PERSIA
ILLUSTRATING THE SPHERES
—— DEFINED AS ——
RUSSIAN, NEUTRAL AND BRITISH,
—— BY ——
THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT
OF AUGUST 31ST 1907.

BOUNDARIES OF PERSIA
LIMIT OF RUSSIAN SPHERE
LIMIT OF BRITISH SPHERE.....

The names given are those ordinarily used in the text.



[ED. NOTE.—Ratifications were exchanged on September 23, *v. supra*, p. 504, No. 456, note (2). Parts of the above text are printed above; Persia, pp. 502-4, No. 456; Afghanistan, pp. 541-4, No. 483; Thibet, pp. 352-4, No. 317. The notes relating to Thibet which were exchanged at the time of the conclusion of the Convention are printed above, pp. 354-5, Nos. 318 (a) and (b). For the text of the *Persian Gulf Declaration* made by Sir Edward Grey at the same time as the signature of the Convention, *v. supra*, pp. 501-2, No. 455, and note.]

APPENDIX II.

THE RUSSIAN PRO-MEMORIA ON THE SUBJECT OF THE RESTORATION OF THE RUSSO-AFGHAN BOUNDARY PILLARS, SEPTEMBER 22/OCTOBER 5, 1903.⁽¹⁾

Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1727.

(No. 320.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 6, 1903.

R. October 9, 1903.

With reference to Sir Charles Scott's despatch No. 284 of the 16th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a *Pro-Memoriâ* which I have received from the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the restoration of the Russo-Afghan Boundary Pillars.

I have, &c.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Pro-Memoriâ.

Par un *Pro-Memoriâ* en date du 30 Août/12 Septembre a[nnée] c[ourante], l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre a bien voulu revenir encore une fois à la question de l'envoi simultané d'officiers Russes et Anglais à la frontière Russo-Afghane pour la réinstallation de quelques piliers de démarcation.

Afin d'éviter tout malentendu, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères croit devoir remarquer que, comme il a été précédemment exposé dans sa notice du 7 août, 1903, ce n'est pas sur le fait de la remise du *Pro-Memoriâ* du 25 janvier/6 février 1900 que se basent les objections du Ministère IMPERIAL, comme l'Ambassade Britannique paraît l'entendre, mais bien sur les considérations qui y étaient longuement développées quant à la nécessité de l'établissement de rapports directs entre la Russia et l'Afghanistan, vu les changements qui s'étaient produits dans l'Asie Centrale pendant les dernières années.

La question du rétablissement des piliers ne touchant en rien à l'ordre général des choses dans ces parages, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères ne peut que réitérer sa ferme décision de suivre le procédé indiqué dans ses communications antérieures et se fait un devoir d'ajouter qu'après les explications franches qu'il était à même de donner à ce sujet il considère la question dont il s'agit comme définitivement close.

St. Pétersbourg, le 22 Septembre/5 Octobre, 1903.

MINUTE.

The note is expressed in ambiguous terms and were it not for the word "objections" one might almost doubt its meaning.

One can infer that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t regard the boundary pillar question as a matter which they insist upon settling directly with the Ameer's Gov[ernmen]t.

Further correspondence seems useless and according to C[oun]t Benckendorff in his interview with Sir C. Scott C[oun]t Lamsdorff does not appreciate the importance attached to the question by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t.

C. H.

please speak.

L.

(¹) [This appears to be the communication described as "peremptory in tone, and almost discourteous in its terms" on p. 184, No. 181 (b). As it is also alluded to pp. 186-7, No. 182, and p. 519, Nos. 465-6, and as in the last instance it is stated that its tone was "deeply resented," the Editors have thought it well to give the text.]

APPENDIX III.

DESPATCH FROM SIR C. HARDINGE TO SIR EDWARD GREY, D. JANUARY 6, 1906,
R. JANUARY 20, 1906, ON THE SUBJECT OF ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/121.

(No. 32.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 6, 1906.

R. January 20, 1906.

I have the honour to report that I arrived in St. Petersburg yesterday. The town presented its usual peaceful aspect with indications of festive preparations for the celebration of Christmas day to-morrow, large numbers of Christmas trees being in the streets for sale.

I at once called upon Count Lamsdorff, and handed to His Excellency an official request to be received in audience by the Emperor so as to present to His Majesty the letter from the King announcing my recall.

It was tacitly agreed that any discussion of political questions should be postponed until another occasion and I therefore called again on Count Lamsdorff to-day and had an hour's friendly conversation with His Excellency.

I told Count Lamsdorff that the day before I left London I had the pleasure of seeing Count Benckendorff, and that His Excellency had given me some notes in his own handwriting from which it appeared that the Russian Government had received information from their Minister in China to the effect that His Majesty's Government were negotiating a treaty with the Chinese Government, relating to Thibet, which would be in contravention with the repeated assurances of Lord [sic] Lansdowne as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government. The substance of the information given by M. Pokhotiloff proved however to be purely imaginary and to have no foundation whatever, and it was evident that he had been made the victim of a deception. I gave Count Lamsdorff a short account of what had taken place and of how the negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty of adhesion had failed, and I assured him that our situation in Thibet remained the same as at the conclusion of the Convention which had been ratified on the 11th November 1904 and subsequently published.⁽¹⁾

His Excellency thanked me for the information and stated that the reports sent by M. Pokhotiloff had appeared to him somewhat vague and improbable, but that he had thought it best to court a contradiction from His Majesty's Government, since there was a certain party in Russia who regarded with jealous suspicion any modification of the *status quo* in Thibet where Russian interests were, however, of a purely religious nature. He expressed his satisfaction that this report has been thus disposed of.

I remarked to Count Lamsdorff that there appeared to me to be some strange Agency at work endeavouring to create a sense of distrust between the two Governments, for, while these baseless reports were being transmitted from China, still more absurd stories had been recently repeated from Constantinople of an extension of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to the Near East with a view to modifying the international situation in the Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.⁽²⁾ Such stories were really too grotesque to require serious contradiction, and it was only from the Russian Government that such an incredible suggestion had been heard. It was however far better in these cases to frankly ask for information from His Majesty's Government and so to prevent the possibility of distrust being created by the intrigues of a third party, and I expressed the hope that Count Benckendorff would invariably in such cases address himself to you or to me when I have taken up my duties at the Foreign Office, and thus prevent the possibility of any misunderstandings.

Count Lamsdorff replied that he had been completely mystified by this information which he had received in circumstantial detail from more than one source, and that he had warned the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople to unravel the mystery and to endeavour to ascertain the object and the origin of this palpable intrigue. He entirely agreed as to the expediency of a frank interchange of information between the two Governments as the best means of frustrating the manœuvres of those who wished to create mischief, and he expressed his confidence that in such a manner the unity of aim of the two countries would gradually become apparent to all parties, and that those differences which had existed in the past would likewise disappear.

To this remark I replied that I had been very much struck during my recent absence in England by the change in public opinion towards Russia and by the warm sympathy generally felt towards her during the serious crisis through which she had been passing. I had been particularly impressed at hearing prayers offered up in a small country Church a few weeks ago for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in Russia, and I regarded such an incident as an

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 314-7, No. 298.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 213-4, No. 200; *cp. also supra*, pp. 228-9, No. 213.]

indication of the feeling of all classes. I felt that after your conversation with Count Benckendorff on the 13th ultimo it was hardly necessary for me to repeat that His Majesty's Government would resume with pleasure at a suitable moment the negotiations for a general understanding on all questions which had unfortunately been interrupted by the outbreak of the war and as a proof of the *bona fides* of the intentions of His Majesty's Government I reminded His Excellency of your statement of your desire to avoid any action which might be interpreted as taking advantage of the embarrassments of the Russian Government or which might prejudice the success of the negotiations later. I remarked, however, that when you had talked to me on this subject before I left London you had distinctly stated that you expected an attitude of reciprocity on the part of the Russian Government and that no attempt would in the meantime be made by them to modify the *status quo* in Persia or elsewhere. I said that Persia had been particularly mentioned since it was known to His Majesty's Government that the Persian Government had made an application some time ago to the Russian Government for a loan of money, and that the loan had not been accepted owing to the onerous nature of the conditions imposed. The Persian Government had thereupon applied to His Majesty's Government, and I knew that you were strongly opposed to granting the Persian Government any money at all, and that you had written to the Prime Minister in that sense.

Count Lamsdorff replied that it was quite true that an application for a loan had been made some time ago by the Persian Government but that he was very averse to giving them any more money, as it was simply throwing money away. He fully appreciated the value of your message to Count Benckendorff and assured me that he gladly undertook to assume an attitude of reciprocity. He stated that there was no fear at present of any policy of adventure being adopted in Persia or elsewhere.

I observed that it was not so much the action of officials or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs which was to be feared as that of persons such as M. Grube who, though belonging to the Ministry of Finance, acted in Persia quite independently of the Russian Legation.

Count Lamsdorff assured me that with the present Minister of Finance I need feel no alarm on that score and that it was not likely that anything would now be done in Persia without his being previously consulted.

I further mentioned that the only possible eventuality by which His Majesty's Government might unwillingly be forced to deviate from their present policy of inaction would be in the case of a fanatical outbreak in the South of Persia against the Christians, when it might become necessary to protect British subjects in the South and more particularly in the ports of the Persian Gulf. Proofs of the imminence of such an outbreak were not however conclusive.

He said that such an outbreak would constitute a common danger and no objection could be raised to the adoption of requisite precautions to crush it at once.

Count Lamsdorff finally expressed to me his great satisfaction at hearing what I had told him of the friendly sympathy manifested in England towards Russia which he interpreted as the result of a higher culture than that which prevails in this country and as a recognition of the necessity of a strong Russia as a counterpoise in the European system. He regarded the improvement in the relations of the two countries as a most happy and welcome omen for the future.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

[ED. NOTE.—It has been thought well to reproduce the full text of this despatch here, since it is mentioned by Mr. C. Spring-Rice in his despatch No. 111 of February 7, 1906 (*v. supra*, p. 379, No. 326), and supplements the documents already given describing the Anglo-Russian negotiations at the beginning of 1906. (*cp. especially pp. 322-3, Ed. note.*)]

APPENDIX IV.

REVISED DRAFT OF ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING PERSIA, SENT TO
SIR A. NICOLSON BY SIR EDWARD GREY ON JUNE 6, 1907.⁽¹⁾

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following text of the British counter-draft sent to Sir A. Nicolson on June 6, 1907, is an alternative version to that given on pp. 466–8, No. 417, *encl.* As explained on p. 468, *Ed. note*, the original has been destroyed with many other documents in the British Embassy at St. Petersburg, and this version differs in important particulars from that given on pp. 466–8. Both are taken from printed copies. On the whole, internal evidence seems to suggest that the copy given below is the authentic one. But this can only be an opinion and the matter cannot be regarded as definitely settled.]

F.O. 371/370.

THE Governments of Great Britain and Russia, having mutually engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia, and being animated by a sincere desire for the preservation of order throughout the Persian Empire and for the peaceful development of that country as well as for the permanent establishment of equal advantages for the trade and industry of all other nations;

Considering that each of them has, for geographical and economic reasons, a special interest in the maintenance of peace and order in certain provinces of Persia adjoining, or in the neighbourhood of, the Russian frontier on the one hand, and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan on the other hand, and that Great Britain has a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf;

Recognizing the injurious effect resulting from the occurrence of local friction in their relations with Persia and with each other; and being desirous of avoiding all cause of conflict between their respective interests in the above-mentioned regions;

Have agreed upon the following Convention:—

ARTICLE I.

Great Britain engages not to seek for herself, and not to support in favour of British subjects or in favour of the subjects of third Powers, any concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c.—beyond a line starting from Kasr-i-Shirin, crossing Yezd and Kakhk and ending at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar concessions in this region which are supported by the Russian Government.

ARTICLE II.

Russia, on her part, engages not to seek for herself and not to support, in favour of Russian subjects, or in favour of the subjects

Les Gouvernements de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Perse, et animés d'un sincère désir pour la préservation de l'ordre dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire Persan et pour le développement pacifique de ce pays, aussi bien que pour l'établissement permanent des avantages égaux pour le commerce et l'industrie de toutes les nations;

Considérant que chacun d'eux a, pour des raisons d'ordre géographique et économique, un intérêt spécial au maintien de la paix et de l'ordre dans certaines provinces de la Perse contiguës ou voisines à la frontière Russe, d'une part, et aux frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan, de l'autre; et que la Grande-Bretagne a un intérêt spécial au maintien du *statu quo* au Golfe Persique;

Constatant l'effet nuisible résultant des cas de friction sur place dans leurs relations avec la Perse et entre eux-mêmes, et étant désireux d'éviter tout motif de conflit entre leurs intérêts respectifs dans les régions susmentionnées;

Se sont mis d'accord sur la Convention suivante:—

ARTICLE I.

La Grande-Bretagne s'engage à ne pas rechercher pour elle-même et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets Britanniques, aussi bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemin de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurance, &c.—au delà d'une ligne partant de Kasri-Chirin, traversant Iezd et Khakh et aboutissant à un point sur la frontière Persane contiguë à l'intersection des frontières Russe et Afghane, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Russe.

ARTICLE II.

La Russie, de son côté, s'engage à ne pas rechercher, pour elle-même, et à ne pas appuyer en faveur de sujets Russes, aussi

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 465–8, No. 417, and *encl.*]

of third Powers, any concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c.—beyond a line going from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand, Kerman and Bunder Abbas, and along the frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar concessions in this region which are supported by the British Government.

ARTICLE III.

Russia, on her part, further engages not to oppose, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, any grant of concessions to British subjects in the regions of Persia outside of the lines mentioned in Articles I and II. Great Britain undertakes a similar engagement as regards the grant of concessions to Russian subjects in the same regions of Persia.

All existing concessions within the lines mentioned in Articles I and II are maintained.

ARTICLE IV.

It is understood that the revenues of all the Persian customs, with the exception of those of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, guaranteeing the repayment and the interests of the loans concluded in Russia by the Government of the Shah, shall be devoted to the same purpose as in the past.

It is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian customs of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, as well as those of the Caspian Fisheries and of the Posts and Telegraphs, shall be devoted, as in the past, to the service of loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia.

ARTICLE V.

In the event of irregularities occurring in the amortization or the payment of the interest of the Persian loans concluded in England or Russia up to the date of the signature of the present Arrangement, and in the event of the necessity arising, for one of the Contracting Parties to establish control over the sources of revenue affected to the regular service of the loans concluded with that Party by Persia, which are situated in the sphere of influence of the other Party, the British and Russian Governments undertake to enter beforehand into a friendly exchange of ideas with a view to determine, in agreement with each other, the means of giving effect to the measures of control in question, and to avoid all interference in the respective spheres which would not be in conformity with the principles governing the present Convention.

bien qu'en faveur de sujets de Puissances tierces, de concessions quelconques de nature politique ou commerciale—telles que les concessions de chemin de fer, de banques, de télégraphes, de routes, de transport, d'assurances, &c.—au delà d'une ligne allant de la frontière Afghane par Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, et Bender-Abbas, et par les frontières de l'Afghanistan et du Béloudjistan, et à ne pas s'opposer, directement ou indirectement, à des demandes de pareilles concessions dans cette région soutenues par le Gouvernement Britannique.

ARTICLE III.

La Russie, de son côté, s'engage, en outre, à ne pas s'opposer, sans entente préalable avec la Grande-Bretagne, à des concessions en faveur de sujets Britanniques dans les régions de la Perse en dehors des lignes dont il a été fait mention aux Articles I et II. La Grande-Bretagne prend un engagement analogue à l'égard des concessions en faveur de sujets Russes dans les mêmes régions de la Perse.

Toute concession actuellement en vigueur dans les limites dont il a été fait mention aux Articles I et II est maintenue.

ARTICLE IV.

Il est entendu que les revenus de toutes les douanes Persanes, à l'exception de celles du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, hypothéqués au remboursement et aux intérêts des emprunts conclus en Russie par le Gouvernement du Schah, seront affectés au même but que par le passé.

Il est également entendu que les revenus des douanes Persanes du Farsistan et du Golfe Persique, aussi bien que ceux des pêcheries Caspiennes et des Postes et Télégraphes, seront affectés, comme par le passé, au service des emprunts conclus par le Gouvernement du Schah avec la Banque Impériale de Perse.

ARTICLE V.

En cas d'irrégularités dans l'amortissement ou le paiement des intérêts des emprunts Persans conclus jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent Arrangement en Russie ou en Angleterre, et si la nécessité se présente pour une des Parties Contractantes d'instituer un contrôle sur les sources des revenus affectés au service régulier des emprunts conclus chez elle par la Perse, qui sont situées dans la sphère d'influence de l'autre Partie, les Gouvernements Russe et Anglais s'engagent à entrer préalablement dans un échange d'idées amical en vue de déterminer, d'un commun accord, les moyens d'effectuer les mesures de contrôle en question, et d'éviter toute ingérence dans les sphères respectives qui ne serait pas en conformité des principes gouvernant la présente Convention.

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EGERTON, SIR E. H., British Ambassador at Madrid, 1903-4; at Rome, 1905-8.

To Sir E. Grey, 252-3 (No. 239).

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ERSKINE, HON. W. A. F., Acting 3rd Secretary at British Legation at Tehran, 1901-3 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); Assistant Clerk in Foreign Office, 1906-8; 1st Secretary of British Embassy at Rome, 1908-11.

Minute by, 302 (No. 283), 454 (No. 410), 579 (No. 519).

FITZMAURICE, LORD E. (since 1906, 1ST BARON FITZMAURICE OF LEIGH), British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1883-5, 1905-8.

Minute by, 288 (No. 265), 458 (*ed. note*).

FRASER, MR. (since 1918, SIR) S. M., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 1904-5; Commission to negotiate with China regarding Anglo-Thibetan Convention, 1904.

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FRENCH, SIR JOHN (since 1915, 1ST VISCOUNT), Major-General, commanding First Army Corps, 1901-7.

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GHALIB PASHA, Grand Master of the Ceremonies to the Sultan of Turkey, 1907-8.

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GORST, SIR ELDON, Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, 1898-1904; British Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1904-7.

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GOSCHEN, SIR W. E., British Ambassador at Vienna, 1905-8; at Berlin, 1908-14.

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GRANVILLE, 2ND EARL, British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1868-70; for Foreign Affairs, 1870-4 and 1880-5.

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GREY, SIR EDWARD (since 1916, 1ST VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON), British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 11, 1905–December 11, 1916.

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GRIERSON, MAJOR-GENERAL SIR J. M., Director of Military Operations, British War Office, 1904–6.

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GRUBE, M., Russian Financial Agent at Tehran, 1906.

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GUBASTOV, M., Russian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906–8.

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HABIBULLAH KHAN, Amir of Afghanistan, 1901–19.

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HAMILTON, LORD GEORGE, Secretary of State for India, 1895–1903.

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HARDINGE, SIR A., British Minister at Tehran, 1900–6; at Brussels, 1906–11.

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- HARDINGE, SIR CHARLES** (since 1910, 1ST BARON HARDINGE OF PENSURST), British Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1903-4; Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1904-6; Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10.
- To Sir E. Grey, 220-1 (No. 206), 622-3 (*App. III*).
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- Conversation with M. Bompard, 66-7 (No. 58), 205-6 (No. 195), 209-10 (No. 197), 211-2 (No. 198), 309 (No. 292), 318 (No. 299), 622-3 (*App. III*).
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- HARTWIG, M.**, Director of First Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1904-6; Minister at Tehran, 1906-9.
- Conversation with Sir C. Hardinge, 199-201 (No. 192).
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- HASSAN KHAN, MIRZA (MUSHIR-UL-MULK; since 1907, MUSHIR-UD-DOWLEH)**, Persian Minister at St. Petersburg, 1902-5; Special Envoy to St. Petersburg and London, 1907; later Minister of Justice, and Prime Minister.
- Conversation with Mr. Grant Duff, 385 (No. 335).
- Conversation with Sir E. Grey, 474-5 (No. 427).
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- Conversation with Sir A. Nicolson, 597-9 (No. 538).
- HAYASHI, BARON** (since 1902, VISCOUNT), Japanese Minister at London, 1900-5; Ambassador, 1905-6; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-8.
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HEYKING, BARON VON, German Minister at Peking, 1896-9.
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HÖHLER, MR. (since 1924, SIR) T. B., 2nd Secretary of British Legation at Tôkiô, 1901-5; at Cairo, 1906-7.
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IGNATIEV, M., Russian Political Agent in Bokhara, 1900.
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ISVOLSKI, M. ALEXANDER, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10.

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JACKSON & Co., Solicitors for Kelsall Brothers and Beeching, Ltd., Hull.

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- JOHNSTONE, MR.** (since 1905, **SIR**) A., Secretary of British Embassy at Vienna, 1903-5; Minister at Copenhagen, 1905-10.
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- JORDAN, MR.** (since 1904, **SIR**) J. N., British Consul-General at Seoul, 1896-1901; Minister at Seoul, 1901-6; at Peking, 1906-20.
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- KOMURA, BARON**, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1901-6, 1908-11; Plenipotentiary for the Peace Negotiations at Portsmouth, 1905; Ambassador at London, 1906-8.
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- LANGLEY, MR. W. L. F. G.**, Senior Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1902-7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907-18.
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LISTER, MR. E. G., Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1899-1903; Acting 3rd Secretary at Constantinople and Sofia, 1903-5; at Paris, 1905-6.

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LOUBET, M. EMILE, President of the French Republic, 1899-1906.

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MAOCARTNEY, MR. (since 1913, SIR) G., British Consul at Kashgar, 1904-10; Consul-General, 1910-18.

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MACDONALD, SIR C. M., British Minister at Peking, 1896-1900; at Tōkiō, 1900-12.

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- MACGREGOR, SIR EVAN**, Permanent Secretary to British Admiralty, 1884-1907.
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- McMAHON, COLONEL SIR ARTHUR H.**, Commissioner in Baluchistan, 1901-2; British Commissioner in Seistan Mission, 1903-5; Agent to the Governor-General and Chief Commissioner of Baluchistan, 1905-11.
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- MAKINO, M. N.**, Japanese Minister at Vienna, 1899-1906.
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- H.R.H. PRINCE MALIK MANSUR**, second son of Muzaffur-ud-Din, Shah of Persia.
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- MALLET, MR.** (since 1905, **SIR LOUIS**, Assistant Clerk, British Foreign Office, 1902-5; *Private Secretary to Sir E. Grey*, 1905-6; Senior Clerk, 1906-7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907-13.
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- MARSCHALL VON BIEBERSTEIN, ADOLF BARON**, German Ambassador at Constantinople, 1897-1912.
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- MAXWELL, MR. R. P.**, Senior Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1902-13.
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- MAYCOCK, MR.** (since 1913, **SIR W. R. D.**, Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1872-1908; Superintendent of Treaty Department, 1903-13.
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- MIDDLETON, 9TH VISCOUNT (HON. WILLIAM ST. JOHN BRODRICK)**, British Secretary of State for War, 1900-3; Secretary of State for India, 1903-5.
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- MINTO, 4TH EARL OF**, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1905-10.
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- MOHAMMED ALI**, Shah of Persia, 1907-9.
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- MOHAMMED ALI KHAN, MIRZA (ALA-ES-SALTANEH)**, Persian Minister at London, 1890-1906; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-7.
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- MONSON, SIR E. J.**, British Ambassador at Paris, 1896-1905.
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- MORLEY, MR. JOHN** (since 1908, **1ST VISCOUNT MORLEY OF BLACKBURN**), British Secretary of State for India, 1905-10.
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- MOTONO, M. ITSCHIRO**, Japanese Minister at Paris, 1902-6; Minister at St. Petersburg, 1906-8; Ambassador, 1908-16.
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- MURAVIEV, COUNT MICHAEL**, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1897-1900.
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MURAVIEV, M. N. V., Russian Minister of Justice, 1895-1905; Ambassador at Rome, 1905-9.

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MUSURUS PASHA, Turkish Ambassador at London, 1903-8.

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MUTSU, COUNT H., 1st Secretary at the Japanese Legation at London, 1901-7 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

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MUZAFFER-UD-DIN, Shah of Persia, 1896-1907.

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NAPIER, LIEUT.-COL. H. D., Military Attaché at the British Embassy at St. Petersburg, 1903-7.

To Sir A. Nicolson, 288-9 (No. 266), 410-1 (No. 367, encl.), 530-2 (No. 476, encl.).

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NAUS, M., Belgian Administrator-General of the Persian Customs.

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NELIDOV, M., Russian Ambassador at Paris, 1903-10.

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NICHOLSON, GENERAL SIR W. G., Director-General of Mobilization and Military Intelligence, British War Office, 1901-4; Chief British Military Attaché to Japanese Army, 1904-5;

Q.M.G. of the Forces and 3rd Military Member of the Army Council, 1905-7.

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- NICOLSON, SIR ARTHUR (since 1916, 1ST BARON CARNOCK), British Ambassador at Madrid, 1905-6; at St. Petersburg, 1906-10; British Representative at Conference at Algeiras, 1906.
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NORMAN, MR. H. C., 2nd Secretary at British Embassy at St. Petersburg, 1903-6; employed in Foreign Office, 1906-7.

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NOTOVIĆ, M., Russian Adventurer.

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O'BEIRNE, MR. H. J., 2nd Secretary at British Embassy at Paris, 1900-4; 1st Secretary, 1904, and British Agent on the North Sea Inquiry Commission, 1904-5; 1st Secretary at Washington, 1905; at Paris, 1905-6; Councillor of Embassy at St. Petersburg, 1906-15 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

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O'CONOR, SIR N. R., British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1895-8; at Constantinople, 1898-1903.

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PAK CHE SOON, Korean Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1905.

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PALITSIN, GENERAL, Head of the Russian General Staff, 1906-7.

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PERCY, H. A. G. EARL, British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1903-5.

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PICHON, M., French Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-11.

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PLEHVE, M., Russian Minister for the Interior, 1902-4.

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PLUNKETT, SIR F., British Ambassador at Vienna, 1900-5.

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POKLEVSKI-KOZIELL, M. P., 1st Secretary at Russian Embassy at London, 1902-9 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

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Conversation with Sir A. Nicolson, 528-9 (No. 474), 529 (No. 476).

POLIVANOV, GENERAL, Russian War Office.

*Conversation with Lieut.-Col. Napier, 531-2 (No. 476, *encl.*).*

POKOTILOV, M., Russian Minister at Peking, 1905-8.

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PRINETTI, SIGNOR, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1901-3.

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REDMOND, MR. W. H. K., M.P. for Clare, 1892-1917.

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REID, MR. WHITELAW, United States Ambassador at London, 1905-13.

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RIPON, THE 1ST MARQUESS OF (G. B. S. Robinson), Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1880-4; Lord Privy Seal, 1905-8.

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- H.H. PRINCE RIZA KHAN (ARFA-UD-DOWLEH), Persian Ambassador at Constantinople, 1900-14.
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- RODD, SIR J. RENNELL, Secretary of British Embassy at Rome, 1901-3 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); Councillor of Embassy, 1904; Minister at Stockholm, 1904-8; Ambassador at Rome, 1908-21.
To the Marquess of Lansdowne, 41-2 (No. 32), 44-6 (No. 34).
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- RÖDIGER, GENERAL, Russian Minister of War, 1905-9.
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- ROJESTVENSKI, ADMIRAL, Commanding the Russian Baltic Fleet, 1904.
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- ROOSEVELT, MR. THEODORE, President of the United States of America, 1901-9.
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- ROSEN, BARON R. VON, Russian Minister at Tôkiô, 1897-1900, 1903-4; Ambassador at Washington, 1905-11; Plenipotentiary for the Peace Negotiations at Portsmouth, 1905.
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- ROUVIER, M. MAURICE, French Finance Minister, 1902-5; Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1905-6.
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- RUNCIMAN, RT. HON. W., M.P., British Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, 1905-7; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1907-8.
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- SALISBURY, THE 3RD MARQUESS OF, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, June 29, 1895-November 12, 1900; Prime Minister, June 29, 1895-July 12, 1902.
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- SATOW, SIR E. M., British Minister at Tôkiô, 1895-1900; at Peking, 1900-6.
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- SAZONOV, M. SERGE, Councillor of Russian Embassy at London (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), 1904-6; Agent to the Vatican, 1906-9; subsequently (1910-6) Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Conversation with the Marquess of Lansdowne, 7-8 (No. 8), 319-20 (No. 301).
- SCHOEN, HERR WILHELM VON, German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1905-7; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1907-10.
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viii	Line 3	...	...	...	...	For "Chapter XXVII" read "Chapter XXVIII".
xii	Para. 1, line 12	...	...	...	...	For "August 29" read "August 23/September 5".
	Para. 3, line 6	...	...	...	...	For "to" read "from".
	Para. 3, line 9	...	...	...	...	For "a despatch from Sir Charles Hardinge of May 18, 1904", read "two despatches from Lord Lansdowne of April 22, and May 4, 1904".
xv	Line 12	...	...	...	...	For "November 10" read "November 6".
xliii	No. 395	...	...	...	...	For "Enclosing Text of Russian draft" read "Enclosing Text of Aide-mémoire upon Russian draft".
44	No. 34, para. 2, line 7	...	...	...	...	For "explained" read "explained".
56	No. 53	...	...	...	...	Under "(No. 40) Treaty" insert "My Lord".
59	Line 13 from bottom	...	...	...	...	For "some" read "same".
95	Note 1, Article III	...	...	...	...	For "conclue et restera" read "conclue et restera valide".
139	Line 2	...	...	...	...	For "1777" read "1717".
166	Article III, column 2, line 1	...	...	...	...	For "possessing" read "possessing".
168	Note 7, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "accept" read "except".
181	No. 178, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "country" read "courtesy".
182	No. 180, Note 1	...	...	...	...	For in "September 27" read "on September 27".
187	Line 4 from bottom	...	...	...	...	For "carying" read "carrying".
199	Line 7	...	...	...	...	For "imaginery" read "imaginary".
208	No. 197, para. 2, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "affecting" read "effecting".
226	No. 210, line 6	...	...	...	...	For "status quo at tho" read "status quo and at the".
256	Note 1, line 5	...	...	...	...	For "le Triple Alliance" read "la Triple Alliance".
260	Line 13	...	...	...	...	For "cf" read "of".
267	Note 1	...	...	...	...	For "Not reproduced" read "v. supra, pp. 252-3, No. 239".
293	Note 1	...	...	...	...	For "Not reproduced" read "v. supra, p. 289, No. 267".
295	Para. 3, line 1	...	...	...	...	For "Russian" read "Persian".
316	Line 4	...	...	...	...	For "sustituted" read "substituted".
353	Line 4 from bottom	...	...	...	...	For "du Chumbi" read "de Chumbi".
357	Line 9 from bottom	...	...	...	...	For "Ports" read "Porte".
397	Para. 4, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "Terehan" read "Teheran".
417	Line 10	...	...	...	...	For "documents" read "document".
424	Note 1, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "1905-1910" read "1905-1909".
426	No. 385, note 1	...	...	...	...	For "February 10, 1906," read "February 10, 1907".
	No. 386, note 1	...	...	...	...	For "telegram No. 24" read "telegram No. 21".
456	Minute by Mr. Mallet, para. 2, line 5	...	...	...	...	For "conversion" read "concession".
458	Minute by Sir C. Hardinge, para. 2, line 14	...	...	...	...	For "l'antiquité" read "l'intégrité".
466	No. 417, enclosure, column 2, line 9	...	...	...	...	For "pour commerce" read "pour le commerce".
471	Para. 7, line 3	...	...	...	...	For "Kushan" read "Kushan [Kashan ?]".
480	Line 7	...	...	...	...	For "Laving" read "Leaving".
482	para. 4, line 3	...	...	...	...	For "As" read "An".
490	No. 440, enclosure, para. 1, line 10	...	...	...	...	For "status quo" read "statu quo".
497	Note 1	...	...	...	...	For "[cp. supra, pp. 460-1, No. 415]" read "[cp. supra, pp. 294-5, No. 274, and p. 303, No. 284]".
498	No. 451, enclosure, para. 2, line 7	...	...	...	...	For "n'étend" read "n'entend".
550	No. 487, Minute by Sir C. Hardinge, para. 3, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "authorities of the frontier" read "authorities on the frontier".
	No. 488, line 5	...	...	...	...	For "annex nor" read "annex or to".
551	No. 490, note 1, line 3	...	...	...	...	For "formerly" read "formally".
552	Para. 2, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "As" read "An".
558	Para. 5, line 5	...	...	...	...	For "dilpomatic" read "diplomatic".
566	Note 5	...	...	...	...	For "p. 502, No. 456," read more probably "pp. 302-3, No. 284".
575	No. 515, signature	...	...	...	...	For "O'Bierne" read "O'Beirne".
579	No. 519, Second Minute by Mr. Mallet, para. 3, line 2	...	...	...	...	For "telegram from MacDonald" read "telegram for MacDonald".
	Ed. Note, line 4	...	...	...	...	For "Chapter XXVII" read "Chapter XXVIII".
598	Line 8 from bottom	...	...	...	...	For "considererd" read "considered".
607	Line 9 from bottom	...	...	...	...	For "Ambasadors" read "Ambassadors".
618	Convention, line 9	...	...	...	...	For "Author" read "Arthur".
620	Annexe, line 8	...	...	...	...	For "du Chumbi" read "de Chumbi".

